

The
Bronze Medallion
&
Lifesaving
Story

James R McClelland

The Bronze Medallion & Lifesaving Story

by

James Robert McClelland

"Our history is the handrail to our future."
© James Robert McClelland 2004

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by James Robert McClelland



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Front cover: William Henry (1859-1928)
(Photo: RLSS-UK)

Bronze Medallion - 1911

Back cover: Bronze Medallion - 1951

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Preface

2016 marks the 125 year anniversary of THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY. With missing and conflicting information in regard to the history of The Royal Life Saving Society, and its founders, I felt the need to bring together this information into one book to help share this exciting and rich history of an organisation that has touched the lives of millions of people in twenty-seven Commonwealth countries, and many non-Commonwealth countries. Also, this short story cannot be told without mentioning the lifesaving award that symbolises a qualified lifesaver – the Bronze Medallion.

It is with pleasure I dedicate this book to the many lifesavers, past and present, of this great worldwide organisation, who have served the public through the education, promotion and provision of aquatic safety, rescue and emergency care. It is fitting 2016 celebrates “125 years of Commonwealth Drowning Prevention”.



As a lifesaver for forty-five years I have been involved continuously in the Ithaca-Caloundra City Life Saving Club Inc., as a lifesaver, committee member, life member, auditor, historian and advisor. I gained my first Bronze Medallion in 1971. I have gained lifesaving experience, over the years, as a volunteer, professional lifeguard, competitor and coach, teacher of lifesaving, administrator, Royal Life Saving Queensland employee and Queensland board member. I am a Life Member of Royal Life Saving Queensland Inc.

A special acknowledgement and thank you to my fellow Club Historian, Paul T Seto, who proof-read this book and spent weeks researching and digging deeper to locate information on the forgotten co-founder of the Society, Archibald Sinclair (1866-1922), journalist and athlete.

Also thanks to Emma Harrison of The Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth office and Penny Turner & Debbie Weston of The Royal Life Saving Society United Kingdom in supplying information and photographs. Finally, thanks to David Browne of RLSS Ireland, an exceptional researcher, for supplying photographs, details of the Society founders and filling in some of the missing links.

Finally, my apologies in advance for any missed or partial information. Please feel free to contact me in regard to any corrections, comments or updates.

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Introduction

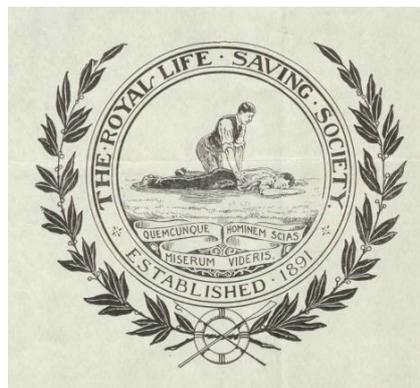
Bronze Medallion – what do people think of when they hear these two words? A lifesaver, more often than not - a highly qualified, well trained lifesaver. The Bronze Medallion, signifying a qualified lifesaver, has been a lifesaving standard award of The Royal Life Saving Society-Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia for over one hundred years. It was developed in England in 1892. It has evolved over the years to accommodate the environmental conditions of Australia.

The Royal Life Saving Society-Australia website describes the Bronze Medallion as being “recognised as a minimum standard for a qualified lifesaver”, which “increases employment opportunities with many pools and aquatic centres.” It further states, the Bronze Medallion course “will enhance your personal survival skills while providing you with the knowledge and skills to develop the level of judgement, technique and physical ability required to safely carry out water rescues.” Surf Life Saving Australia’s website states the “Bronze Medallion course provides participants with skills and knowledge of patrolling and surf awareness in order to be able to participate in lifesaving operations” and “is the core award to be a surf lifesaver in Australia.”

The Bronze Medallion, or Medallions made of Bronze have been with us for thousands of years. Medallions have been struck by societies and groups of people for many reasons. Be it to commemorate a significant event or give reward for saving of life or reward for competition, or even attending every day of school, as was done in England during the nineteenth century. As with The Royal Life Saving Society’s Bronze Medallion, the Medallions do not carry the phrase Bronze Medallion. They are simply that - a Bronze Medallion.

Of the five original Commonwealth Branches, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom, only three continue to provide the Bronze Medallion Award. They are Australia, Canada and New Zealand. With over two million Royal Life Saving Society awards issued each year, the Bronze Medallion still holds pride of place in many countries, including Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, to name a few.

One cannot commence the Bronze Medallion story and how it changed over the century without starting at the beginning and look into the birth of the organisation that made the Bronze Medallion what it is today – The Royal Life Saving Society.





The Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth's Promotional Logo for the 125th Anniversary

The Commonwealth President, H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent, established the “H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent 125th Anniversary Certificate of Merit” to honour individuals who have given distinguished service to the Society. In addition, a unique 125th Anniversary Certificate has been created to honour individuals, worldwide, whose past performance or future promise; contribute to the drowning prevention mission of The Royal Life Saving Society. With almost 200 nominations, around the world, there were 125 awardees – 27 from Australia, with 7 Queenslanders (and 3 highlighted Ithaca-Caloundra City Life Saving Club members) receiving this honour:

Paul Barry

Suzanne Baxter-Winch
Richard Franklin

Jeanette May Baxter-Reid

John Winch

Robert Reid

Shayne Baker



Before the Lifesaving Society

Swimming has been around for millennia - be it to enter waters while travelling for war, safety from danger or bathing. Near Sura in south-western Egypt, 10,000 year old rock paintings in the 'Cave of Swimmers' depict people swimming. Early written references can be found in the Old Testament of the Bible. In 1539 German professor of languages, Nikolaus Wynmann, wrote the first swimming book, *Colymbete*. It contained instruction to learn breaststroke and also the use of swimming aids. English academic Everard Digby wrote, in 1587, *De arte natandi* also depicting breaststroke, backstroke and crawl.

During the Tudor period (24.08.1485 to 24.03.1603) drowning was on the increase, so much so, it appeared in literature (often lethal): "... her garments, heavy with their drink, Pull'd poor wretch from her melodious lay to muddy death." (Ophelia's Death from Hamlet by William Shakespeare). Females spent a lot of time at ponds and streams in daily life, as chores, such as gathering water, taking animals to water, washing and laundry, were done outside the Tudor home. It was all too easy to slip and fall, due to the heavy (and highly absorbent) clothing and slippery banks. The cold water took heat away from the body and thus resulting in cold water shock. During the 16th century drowning accounted for 40% of accidental deaths in England (as compared to 2% in 2010). By the end of 16th century deaths by drowning decreased due to covers on village wells, installation of water pumps and fencing off water courses. Pool, or water safety, clearly started many years ago!

In 1603 the Japanese Emperor, Go-Yozei, declared that schoolchildren should swim. Clearly swimming or bathing was on the increase, and so was drowning.

The first bathing machines (cabins on wheels pulled by horses or men to the water's edge), resembling a private ocean pool were on the Yorkshire coast, England in 1735. This activity was more seen as dunking for the elite. In Sydney, as early as 1850, there were bath houses.

From the 1880's broad debate, in England, was occurring accepting the unchallenged connection between clean water, swimming and health. Further, it was the belief that baths should also be used for swimming due to the increase benefits for health and cleanliness. Municipal bath facilities, in England, increased from 1 in 1845 to 50 in 1865, 127 in 1890, 206 in 1900 and 343 in 1915.¹ In Australia baths were opening in the 19th century; Newcastle's ocean Bogey Pool in 1819; Brisbane's Victoria Baths, a floating bath in the river, in 1857 and the first non-river bath at Spring Hill, near Brisbane city, in 1886; and Melbourne's City Baths in 1860.

By the late 1700's swimming began to be recognised as a sport and pastime, and emerging as a competitive sport around the 1830's in England. The first open-air bath, purpose built for swimming, was at Pearless Pool, North London, in 1743. The first indoor swimming pool, St George's Baths, Liverpool, was opened to the public in 1828. British swimmers swam only breaststroke, in competitions, from around 1844 until 1873. The faster sidestroke became popular by the late 1840's. In Japan however, the first swimming competition was held in 1810.

¹ Love, C. (2008). A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918. p129.



In about 1836 or 1837 the National Swimming Society was founded. It lasted however only approximately ten years. By 1880 a number of regional swimming associations were formed. The Amateur Swimming Association was formed in 1886. Germany's association was founded in 1882, France in 1890 and Hungary in 1896. The first European swimming competitions were held in Vienna in 1889. The first women's competition, in 1892, was held in Scotland. The first public exhibitions of women swimming was in Denmark and Norway from 1856. Women were first allowed to swim in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm.

The Royal Humane Society (originally called the Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned) was founded in 1774. With instruction from the Royal Humane Society, some individual swimming clubs had given prizes for excellence in rescue and resuscitation.² There was no combined effort by the swimming clubs.

First lifesavers in the USA were in 1807 when the Massachusetts Humane Society initiated shore-based rescues of sailors from shipwrecks. This followed in 1878 with the creation of the US Life-Saving Service, which, in 1915, merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to become the US Coast Guard. In the early 1800's hotels along the Atlantic City coast would employ lifeguards. The local council commenced employment of lifeguards in 1855. The US Volunteer Life Saving Corps was created in 1892, but faded over time. Paid lifeguards commenced in California, at Long Beach in 1908.

In the UK the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded in 1824 as the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

By 1843 the Royal Humane Society was providing boatmen to supervise swimmers in the Serpentine.³ From 1880 the Royal Humane Society promoted lifesaving competition in schools. They however, targeted a limited audience. An organisation that would teach lifesaving to the general public (and to all school children, not just to children attending a few privileged schools) was needed.

From 1864 to 1874 out of total deaths of 4,060 in Victoria, Australia drowning totalled 2,479, (or 61.06%).⁴ The Royal Humane Society came to Melbourne, Australia in 1874. By April 1877 lifesaving instruction was well underway in Victorian, Tasmanian and New Zealand schools. The Royal Humane Society in Australasia then began to confine its activities to rewarding acts of bravery.⁵

Drowning (both accidental and suicide) in England and Wales increased from 2,483 (2,036 males/447 females) in 1860 to 4,028 (3,042 males/986 females) in 1878, and during 1890 totalled 2,998 (2,378 males/620 females).⁶

² Sinclair, A. (1894). *Swimming*. p62.

³ Love, C. (2008). *A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918*. p101.

⁴ Bannister, C. (1996). *7000 Brave Australians*. Victoria. p9.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Love, C., Op Cit. p103.



The Royal Life Saving Society

“The ability to save life is the glorious privilege of a swimmer, and many are ever ready to risk their own lives in order to aid others in danger. That the ability ought to be cultivated is unquestionable, for the danger to the rescuer is thereby minimised, and his changes of successfully rendering efficient aid increased.”⁷

In early 1887 twenty-eight year old champion swimmer William Henry recognised that drowning was preventable and knowing something had to be done he petitioned the Royal Humane Society to undertake the training of lifesaving skills. With little interest, no action was taken by the Royal Humane Society. However, William Henry and his journalist friend and water polo player, Archibald Sinclair, followed up with a letter dated 29th November 1887, setting forth a scheme for forming classes of instruction in lifesaving, to which the Society replied the following day; “the committee can do no more without neglecting the legitimate work of the Society”.⁸

After a couple of years William Henry and Archibald Sinclair then approached the Amateur Swimming Association. The Association appointed a committee, which on the 11th May 1889 made its report. The committee recommended: a committee should be appointed; classes be held in different districts arranged by swimming clubs at times set by the central committee; demonstrations & lectures be arranged by the central committee; and clubs print lifesaving rules in their books of fixtures. The committee further recommended: a preliminary meeting be held at a good bath to demonstrate rescue work followed by a social meeting to discuss the matter; a circular be sent to all affiliated clubs; and assistance be made to the Royal Humane Society, St John Ambulance Association & the Corporation of London. Nothing was done.

The reason for the lack of action is unknown, but lack of finance and a lack of executive interest in the project, could be considered the likely reasons. As part of the plan, assistance was required from the Royal Humane Society, the St John Ambulance Association and the Corporation of London, which more than likely entailed raising money. Academic Christopher Love believes there were internal reasons why the swimming world would not accept the report’s initiative; the Amateur Swimming Association was undergoing internal reorganisation after being created by the merger, in 1886, of the Amateur Swimming Union and the Swimming Association of Great Britain. Thus the need to devote its energies to projects deemed more immediately important, such as the best way to organise itself on a regional level.⁹

William Henry and Archibald Sinclair were not deterred.

William Henry and Archibald Sinclair wrote; “The neglect of diving, floating, plunging and scientific swimming by ordinary clubs led, in 1891, to the calling of a meeting of seven gentlemen interested in swimming, for the purpose of founding a special club to encourage the arts named, and, in addition, to vigorously carry out instruction, &c., the recommendations of the Amateur Swimming Association as to the saving of life from drowning.”¹⁰

⁷ Sinclair, A., & Henry, W. (1893). *Swimming*. p170.

⁸ Pearsall, R. (1991). *Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years*. p8.

⁹ Love, C. (2008). *A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918*. p105.

¹⁰ Sinclair, A., & Henry, W. *Op Cit*. p214.



In the beginning

On the 3rd January 1891 William Henry and Archibald Sinclair along with their close friends (all swimmers) Walter S Brickett, H Hewitt Griffin, C Val Hunter, Frederick W Moses and Edward W Stafford held a meeting at Anderton's Hotel, London, at which approximately sixty people were in attendance. A committee of twelve was appointed to create the rules of the new association titled 'The Ornamental Swimming, Diving, and Life-Saving Society'.¹¹

On the 7th February 1891 a General Meeting was held, thus forming 'The Swimmer's Life Saving Society'. The name was changed within the year to 'The Life Saving Society'.



(Photo: archiseek.com)

The Anderton's Hotel (circa 1385, rebuilt 1880 and demolished 1939) was an interesting choice for a venue. It was located at Fleet Street, which (until the 1980s) was once the centre of British Press and Journalism. One of the Society founders, Archibald Sinclair, was a journalist. Also, The Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street's oldest inn, was a popular location for clubs and associations to meet. No doubt the proximity to the press and of course many journalists attending to their business and liquid pleasures at the premises made it an ideal place to gain favourable attention of the media, for many associations' benefits.

William Henry and Archibald Sinclair were appointed the first Honorary Joint Secretaries of the Society. The first year was devoted to mainly organisation. It clearly paid off. The main aim of the Society was to raise swimming above the level of competitive sport and make swimmers aware that just swimming was not enough for the saving of life but to develop a rescue system that would be effective, attractive and simple to understand.

With Victorian philanthropic work on the rise, the world of Victorian swimming and Victorian humanitarian ideals were drawn together with the formation of The Life Saving Society. The Society exists for the benefit of the community.

Motto

The Society's motto "*Quemcunque Miserum Videris Hominem Scias*" (Whomsoever you see in distress, recognise in him a fellow man) was adapted from a quotation from Seneca, a Roman philosopher who lived between 4BC to 65AD. The earliest known use of the motto, in its Latin form, was on a Society letter to William Wilson, dated 8th September 1892.¹² It was also used in the Society's first Annual Report of 1893.

Headquarters

The Joint Secretaries administered the Society from William and Elizabeth Henry's home at 3 Clarendon Square, St Pancras, London, which was Elizabeth's uncle's and aunt's family home, where she lived most of her life. William Henry "came into a fortune of £20,000" in late 1896.¹³ They moved, along with the Society, in 1897 to larger premises at 8 Bayley Street, St Pancras London. From 1896 Henry was the sole Honorary Secretary, until his death in 1928.

¹¹ Sachs, F. (1912). *The Complete Swimmer*. p115.

¹² Love, C. (2008). *A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918*. p113.

¹³ Sporting Gossip. (26.09.1896). *Yorkshire Gazette*. p12.



The Society remained at 8 Bayley Street, and registered a lease over the property for 22 years from 29th September 1928 for rent of £150. During the Second World War the Society moved to temporary headquarters at 11 Thetford Road, New Malden in Surrey.



125th anniversary conference delegates outside 8 Bayley Street - February 2016. (Photo: RLSS Commonwealth)

After the war the Society purchased a property at 14 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, London, named 'Desborough House', after Lord Desborough, a past President. The next move, in 1980, for both the Commonwealth Secretariat and United Kingdom Branch, was to a more central location; Studley Warwickshire. Central location that is, to all the United Kingdom Branches. This stately manor was named after past Grand President, Lord Mountbatten. The final move for the Society was in the late 1990s to 'River House', Broom, also in Warwickshire.

The early years

The first lecture was given on 25th May 1891 by Sir Andrew Clark, personal physician to the Prime Minister, at the Polytechnic Institute, London. The lecture was followed by numerous demonstrations. The Society moved quickly, establishing public demonstrations and developing an attractive demonstration to keep the interest of the public. By the end of 1892 more than 90 public lectures and demonstrations had been held. These lectures were supported by the production of several sets of lantern slides, which greatly enhanced the speakers lecture.

The Society greatly utilised the medium of the print media. In its first two years alone hundreds of articles were published in 48 different newspapers and journals across the United Kingdom. Also common at the time was the use of an associations own journal. Initially for a short time, the Society used the *First Aid* journal of the St John Ambulance Association. Then it produced *The Swimming Magazine* from 1898 to 1899. The magazine was resurrected in 1914 and ran for four more years.¹⁴

The most important and the greatest impact was the instruction of lifesaving in schools, both public schools and state schools with the greatest emphasis placed on lifesaving lessons within the state system. The first official school classes were run in 1892 in London Board schools.¹⁵

¹⁴ Love, C. (2008). *A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918*. p111.

¹⁵ Ibid.



The first handbook, edited by Archibald Sinclair and William Henry, was published in late 1891. Classes increased with the publication of the first handbook. The Bronze Medallion was introduced in 1892. In 1892, not only were over 30 rescues recorded (16 by members of The Life Saving Society), but 86 Bronze Medallions were awarded. The first ten female candidates were amongst the 207 Bronze Medallions awarded in 1893. In 1894, 334 medallions and certificates were awarded and in 1897 1,174 were issued, in the United Kingdom.¹⁶



'Bronze Medallion'

The Diploma award was instituted in 1896 and is still the highest lifesaving award of the Society. Diplomas issued from 1896 to the end of 1911 totalled 74, with 4 from Australia and 30 awarded to women.¹⁷

An effective tool to secure interest in any activity is the human interest in competition. The Society was no different. In 1892 a national competition of 24 teams, each with 4 members, was held. There were 31 teams in 1893 and 44 teams in 1894.¹⁸ International competitors attended the English competitions. The King's Cup, a trophy presented by King Edward VII in 1903, was a competition to find the best swimmer and lifesaver in England and Australia. In its ninth year, 1911, the Cup was won by E G Finlay of Perth, West Australia.¹⁹



Lord Desborough addressing competitors at the Society's Gala at Highgate Pond (Photo: The Complete Swimmer)

¹⁶ Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p16.

¹⁷ Sachs, F. (1912). The Complete Swimmer. p121.

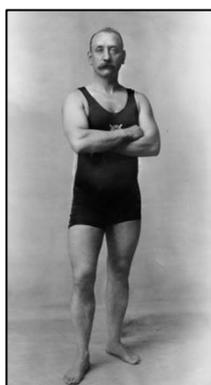
¹⁸ Love, C. (2008). A Social History of Swimming in England, 1800-1918. p107.

¹⁹ Sachs, F. (1912). The Complete Swimmer. p127.



The Society spread throughout the world. William Henry in 1910 is quoted as saying; “The inception of The Royal Life Saving Society was due to the oft-expressed desire to minimise the great loss of life from drowning, to teach those possessed of ordinary courage the best methods of rescue and the resuscitation of the apparently drowned. The desire to save a human life, the thought to lend a hand to a brother in peril, the sympathy with distress which many feel but know little how to express, so greatly underlie the work of the Society that there is little wonder that it has found its way into human hearts far from London, the city of its birth.”²⁰

William Henry toured promoting the Society’s work and sometimes examining candidates for the Bronze Medallion and Certificates of the Society. He not only travelled extensively to all parts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales but toured the world promoting the Society. The first Branch was formed in Manchester 1894, the same year the New South Wales Branch was formed. Henry visited Sweden (1898), Italy (1901), Germany & Austria (1902), Canary Islands (1908), Canada & the United States (1909), Australia & New Zealand (1910-11) and South Africa (1913). Henry was presented with a reel and line in 1910 from the Surf Bathers’ Association of New South Wales. In 1910 when visiting Brisbane, Queensland at a carnival at the Booroodabin Baths (now the Valley Pool) Henry plunged (underwater) the full length of the baths (90ft).²¹



William Henry was an energetic man that led the Society from 1891 to his death in 1928, and no doubt laid the foundation for the modern Society of today. Frank Sachs who lists himself as an original member of the Committee of The Royal Life Saving Society asked Henry for the names of those who had done prominent work for the Society, and he replied; “It would be extremely difficult to give the names of the people who work for us because they are so numerous; in every town and city throughout Great Britain, and in many places in the colonies, we have enthusiasts who are working for us.”²² Henry was clearly a modest man. However, with Henry’s zeal and high level of organisational skills, he was the right man in the right place, at the right time. His work load would have been heavy and unremitting, but his enthusiasm clearly never tired.²³

The Society’s *Handbook of Instruction* had been translated into Swedish and Italian. By 1916 the Deutscher Samaritan Bund and the Finnish Life-Saving Society had requested to translate the handbook into their respective languages. In India, the handbook was translated into Parsee.

The Society’s awards gained each year, throughout the world, was well over 10,000. The awards diminished during the First World War, but quickly exceeded 20,000 per annum in the early 1920s and by 1931 had exceeded 75,000 per annum. The 1930s saw the production of the Society’s first promotional film.²⁴

Queen Elizabeth II in her February 2016 congratulatory letter to the Society said “Beginning in England where it was founded, and now in twenty-seven Commonwealth countries, the Society has made great progress, developing programmes, techniques and working with others to achieve results.”

²⁰ www.rlsscommonwealth.org.

²¹ The Late Mr Henry. (24.03.1928). The Brisbane Courier. p21.

²² Sachs, F. (1912). The Complete Swimmer. p124.

²³ Ibid. p126.

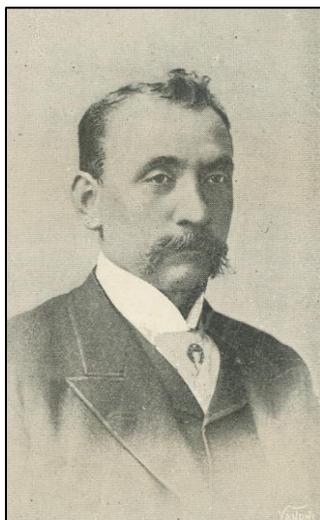
²⁴ Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p29.



The Founders

Of the original seven men that founded the Life Saving Society, Archibald Sinclair and William Henry are known as the 'co-founders'. Henry is often referred to as the 'founder'. His life's commitment, right up until his death, rightly gives him this title. Even Sinclair in his book, *Swimming* (1894), refers to Henry as 'Founder of the Life Saving Society'. Who were these two great men; William Henry and Archibald Sinclair, and the others, whose names we never see?

William Henry



William was Vice President and founding Joint Honorary Secretary from 1891 to 1895 and then the sole Honorary Secretary (later Chief Secretary) until his death.

William Henry was born Henry William Nawrocki on the 28th June 1859, at St Pancras, to a Polish father and English mother. His father, Joseph Nawrocki, was apparently a Polish aristocrat and served as a diplomat in London. However, Joseph Nawrocki's occupation was recorded as a Leather Finisher on the 1861 census records. His mother, Elizabeth (recorded as Eliza on William's birth records) Amour, was a nurse with Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War. Henry died at Tavistock Square on the 20th March 1928 after a short illness, a few months short of his 69th birthday.

William married Elizabeth Spencer at the Parish Church, St Pancras on the 24th March 1883. The marriage certificate recorded an age difference of five years. This is incorrect. Based on birth records, Elizabeth was 7 years and 2 months older than William. Elizabeth was born on the 5th April 1852 at Eversley. She died at her son's residence, Sunbury, on the 2nd March 1934, one month short of her 82nd birthday. Her headstone incorrectly displays an age of 83 years.

Elizabeth lived with her uncle and aunt, William and Honor Harding, at Clarendon Square, St Pancras from at least the age of 10 (as per the 1861 census). When William and Elizabeth married they lived in Elizabeth's home at Clarendon Square, later moving into the larger premises at Bayley Street, St Pancras in 1897. The census records of 1891 records William's occupation as an Upholsterer's Foreman. The 1901 census records his occupation as Secretary Life Saving Society, then in 1911 as Secretary.

Little is known of William Henry's early life. It appears he spent time in Poland (then under Prussia rule), his father's homeland. The family returned to England in 1877.²⁵

Not acknowledged by some historians, William and Elizabeth had one child. Harding Francois Nawrocki was born at Clarendon Square on the 13th December 1884. He married his first cousin Lottie Nawrocki at the Register Office, St Giles on the 22 September 1914. The 1911 census indicates Lottie lived with William's family. They had no children and separated in 1918. They appeared to have no further contact. Harding died, with no family, on the 15th August 1961 at the Prospect Park Hospital. Lottie died in 1976, at Rockford, UK, outliving her new partner and son.

²⁵ Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p11.



Five years after the founding of The Life Saving Society Henry William Nawrocki changed his name by Deed Poll, dated 16th March 1896, to William Henry. Reasons given for the name change were the problem English people had pronouncing his name (phonetically pronounced ‘Navrotski’) and family tradition stating it was changed at the behest of Queen Victoria.

In a reply to Frank Sachs, William Henry wrote: “I first learnt to swim at school, and in order to get the strokes a board was provided for our use, about 10 ft. long, 9 inches wide, and 2 ½ inches thick, on which we laid and propelled ourselves across the pond, irrespective of any thought of danger. One day my brother gave it a knock when I was within a few yards of the shore and I had to swim or drown. I didn’t do the latter, as is perhaps well known. When the Fitzroy Baths, Tottenham Court Road, opened, I was frequently there, and saw W. Holmes swim a race, and, being much struck with his method, I imitated him, and later joined the Zephyr Swimming Club, with the results that in the end I became a swimmer, not before, however, going through much trouble at home. At the time I was considered to be in a very indifferent state of health, and was advised by the doctor to take up athletic exercise. He said, ‘Go in for boxing.’ I did, and was not free from a black eye for months and nearly ordered out of home. I gave up boxing and took to running, but stuck to swimming, and ever since then I have taken special interest in anything fresh in connection with the strokes, having an idea that it is well to do as others do when they do well. I have advised this course and got myself frequently into hot water, as there are people who do not agree with my advice which would lead them to do better.”²⁶

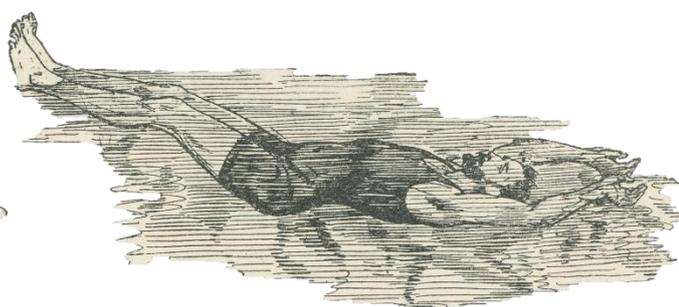
William Henry started with the Zephyr Swimming Club in 1879 and gained his first placing in a national competition in 1881; fifth in the 5 ½ mile long distance race. He became a national and international swimmer, water polo player and diver.

He won the Clayton Challenge Cup in 1882, the 1889 440 yards salt water event, and 1890 long distance salt water event (5 to 6 miles). William was the winner of the National Graceful Swimming Shield of the Bath Club in 1891.

William won the English scientific championships in 1896, 1899, 1900 and 1901. After the third victory in 1901 he won the trophy outright.



Diagrams of Scientific Swimming



'Steam Tug' & 'Torpedo' (Photos: Swimming, 1916)

²⁶ Sachs, F. (1912). The Complete Swimmer. pp9-10.



William Henry also won several international competitions. He won the Life Saving Championship at the World Championship in Paris in 1900.

He was a member of the winning water polo team at the 1900 Olympics. In 1906, at the age of 46, he became the oldest Olympic medal winner in swimming as a member of the British men's 4 x 250 metre relay team, which won the bronze medal.

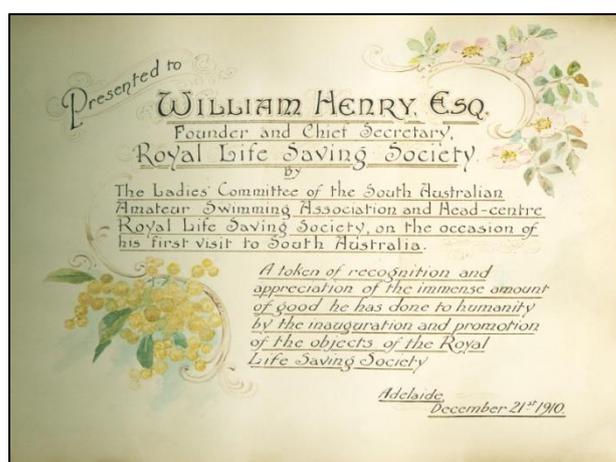


Winning over 600 prizes during his swimming career, William Henry, in later years, used his awards to decorate his office.

He took part in the forming of the Amateur Swimming Association and the London Water Polo League and was a member of the Southern Countries executive and the Middlesex County Water Polo Association. He was elected president of the Southern Counties Amateur Swimming Association in 1897.

William Henry was not only active in administration, but also demonstrating and examining candidates and would prove his point by his own actions. On one occasion examining a candidate, the candidate complained that the man who he was to rescue was bigger than himself. William Henry, a very big and heavy man, who was in his swimming costume, jumped in the water and told a local schoolboy, who had passed the examination, to rescue him, which the schoolboy did, much to the amusement of the onlookers and to the great surprise of the complaining candidate.²⁷

He also designed the swimming pool and diving tower used for the 1908 London Olympics. The pool was opened in 1908, at the now demolished White City Stadium.²⁸



Presented to William Henry from South Australian Branch – 21st December 1910 (Photo: RLSS UK)

²⁷ Death of Mr W Henry A Redoubtable Swimmer. (23.03.1928). Kent & Sussex Courier. p20.

²⁸ Opening the Stadium. (13.06.1908). The West Australian. P5. & David Browne of RLSS Ireland.



When William Henry died, in 1928, newspapers across world featured articles on his achievements, including every Australian state.

William and Elizabeth were buried at Highgate Cemetery, north London, only a mile from Highgate Ponds, where much of the Society's early work was undertaken. The memorial is an impressive marble headstone.

The photo at right was taken at the Henrys' gravesite in 1932. Their son, Harding Henry (left) is with G Billson, Chairman of the New Zealand RLSS Branch.



(Photo: RLSS UK via David Browne)

The Henrys' memorial deteriorated, as happens with most headstones, and was in need of restoration, prior to the 125th anniversary celebrations, in February 2016. Below is a photo taken, in 2013, by David Browne, of RLSS Ireland.



August 2013

As a way of paying tribute to William Henry, David Browne, approximately every six months, over a three year period had cleaned the headstone in time for the celebrations.



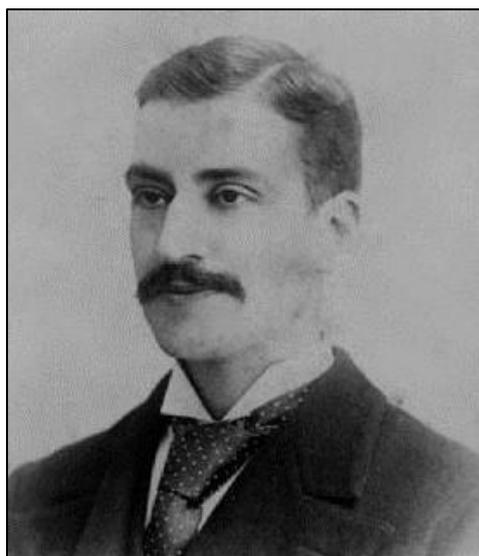
February 2016

William Henry never received public recognition for his work, while alive. It was said he saved more lives than any other man in the world²⁹. He was however, in 1974, finally inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame (founded 1964); located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, United States.

²⁹ General Section. (22.03.1928). The Echu, Victoria. p5.



Archibald Sinclair



Archibald was elected Vice President of the society after holding office as one of the founding Joint Honorary Secretaries of The Life Saving Society from 1891 to 1895.

Archie was born at Fulham on the 11th January 1866. His parents were Archibald Sinclair, a Nursery Foreman who was born in Scotland in 1837, and Sarah Ann Tilley also born in 1837, in Longbridge Wiltshire. He died after a long illness at the Kings College Hospital on the 24th March 1922, aged 56 years.

He married Helen Elizabeth Miller at the All Saints' Church, Fulham on the 30th April 1888. Helen was born on the 3rd October 1868 at Chelsea and died at the West Middlesex Hospital on the 21st November 1956 aged 88

years.

The 1891 census indicates Helen lived with Archie and his parents at Kings Road, Fulham before moving to their own place at Upper Grotto Road, Twickenham, as per the 1911 census. Archie and Helen had four children; Nellie Grace (1890), Douglas Archibald (1891), Donald Henry (1893) and Philip Charles (1899). Their son, Douglas, was a noted botanist and immigrated to New Zealand.

Archie was a prominent athlete, swimmer and water polo player. He was one of the founders of the London Water Polo League (1889). He was a member of the Ranelagh Harriers Athletic Club and became an official in the Amateur Athletic Association and executive of the Amateur Swimming Association. Later in life his interests were more centred in horse trotting.³⁰

He was a journalist. He listed his occupation in 1881 (aged 15) as a clerk, then in 1891 as a clerk & journalist (aged 25) and finally a sports journalist in 1911. Archie wrote extensively on sport and for almost 25 years was editor of the sporting newspaper, *The Referee*. He contributed many articles in *The Sportsman* under the pseudonyms of Marcilan and Dagenham.

Archie co-authored with William Henry the 19th volume, *Swimming* (1893), in the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes. The eighth and final edition was published in 1916. He wrote *Swimming* (1894 & 1909), *Swimming and Life Saving* (1906), and co-authored a number of other books.



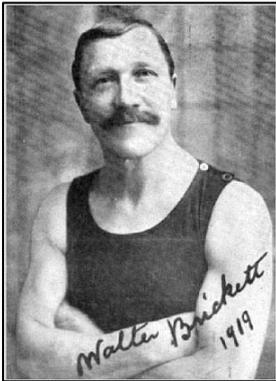
He was awarded the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (a royal order of chivalry first constituted in 1888 by royal charter from Queen Victoria).³¹

³⁰ Death of Noted Swimming Authority. (24.05.1922). *Referee*, Sydney. p13.

³¹ The above information and photos for Sinclair is credited to David Browne of RLSS Ireland and Paul T Seto of RLSS Queensland.

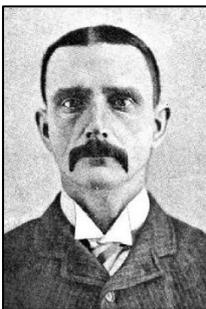


Walter Septimus Brickett



Walter, a piano-maker by trade, was born in 1865 in London and died at Chichester in 1933. A well know Victorian swimmer he came third in the 1891 quarter mile salt water World Championships at Portsmouth, a race that had been won by William Henry the two previous years. He trained many Channel swimmers. He also was the coach of the British swimming, diving and water polo teams for the London and Stockholm Olympics. The water polo team won gold at the Stockholm games. In 1914 he created a novelty world record in athletics by covering seven miles by different methods (walking, running, swimming, rowing and cycling) in less than 46 minutes.

Harry Hewitt Griffin



Hewitt was born in Ontario, Canada in 1854 and died in 1918 at his home in Putney, London. He was a statistician and journalist. Hewitt was a noted athlete and cyclist. In 1880, at the London Athletic Championships, he came third in the 40 mile walk event, to name just one event. He was a successful swimming competitor as far back as 1875.

Hewitt became a handicapper for the National Cycling Union and edited a history of cycling sport, *Cycles and Cycling*.

Charles Valentine Hunter



Val, an architect practising in London, was born at Hastings in 1843 and died in London in 1914. He was involved in the Ranelagh Harriers Athletic Club and the Blackheath Harriers. He served as President of the Blackheath Harriers. The Ranelagh Harriers Athletic Club had an active aquatic and water polo team. Val represented the Castle Baynard Ward as a member of the Council of the Corporation of the City of London.

Frederick W Moses

Frederick, a member of the Zephyr Swimming Club, was a swimmer and exponent of scientific swimming. In 1884 he was champion of the City of London, came third in the English long distance championship and finished second in the English half mile championship. Also in this year he beat defending champion William Henry in the race for the captaincy of their swimming club.

Edward W Stafford

Edward was born in 1853 and died in London, aged 62, in 1915. He was a water polo player for the Lewisham Swimming Club and a practitioner of plunging. He was also an official of the Kent County Water Polo and Swimming Association.³²

³² The above information, and photos, for the 'Founders' on this page is credited to David Browne of RLSS Ireland.





HRH Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II) qualified as a lifesaver and competed in lifesaving competitions. At the Bath Club (situated ‘up the hill’ from Buckingham Palace, in nearby Mayfair) the young Princess won the Children’s Challenge Cup when she was eleven. The ‘BC’ on the bathing costume of the Princess, above, would denote the ‘Bath Club’. It is interesting to note the Society’s logo also on the costume above, has been rotated to the right, so as to display the Society’s logo with the word ‘Royal’ uppermost.



Royals & Aristocrats

Being a swimming teacher to the Royal Family, William Henry may have had some influence with the Royal Family, whom he taught at the Bath Club, Dover Street, Piccadilly London.³³

HRH the Duke of York (later King George V) became the Society's first President and HRH the Duke of Teck became the Vice-President at the Annual Meeting in February 1893. In 1901 King Edward VII became Patron of the Society. His Majesty's support of the Society was such, he presented a cup for competition and the King and Queen attended the first competition for the King's Cup, which was won by England with Hungary runner-up.



In March 1905, His Majesty King Edward VII, in recognition of the good work performed by the Society, ordered The Life Saving Society be known as The Royal Life Saving Society.



Lord Desborough

In just over a decade the Society had gone from being a newly founded and unknown organisation to one that had the patronage of senior members of the Royal Family.

When King Edward VII died in 1910, King George V consented to become Patron. William Henry Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough, was acting President since 1901 and became President in 1910, and remained so until his death in 1944. Lord Desborough, born in 1855, was a sportsman and extremely active in the Society.

King George VI became Patron in 1937. Admiral of the Fleet, Louis Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Mountbatten, 1st Earl of Mountbatten of Burma, became Vice-President in 1943 and at His Majesty's invitation became the Grand President of the Society in 1945, after the death of Lord Desborough. HRH Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II) became Vice-Patron and later Patron in 1952, after the death of King George VI.

King George VI and Lord Mountbatten both viewed the Society's expansion as a way of extending lifesaving to the Commonwealth. Lord Mountbatten travelled extensively, including to Australia. Lord Mountbatten retired as Grand President November 1972 and was replaced by HRH Princess Alexandra. In 1978, HRH Princess Alexandra passed the Presidency to her brother, HRH Prince Michael of Kent.

At a grass roots level, HRH Princess Elizabeth passed the first Junior Respiration Examination in 1941, having already gained her Elementary Certificate in 1937. Her sister, HRH Princess Margaret gained her Certificate in 1939. HRH Prince Charles gained both his Elementary Certificate and Bronze Medallion in 1962.



Princess Elizabeth in action

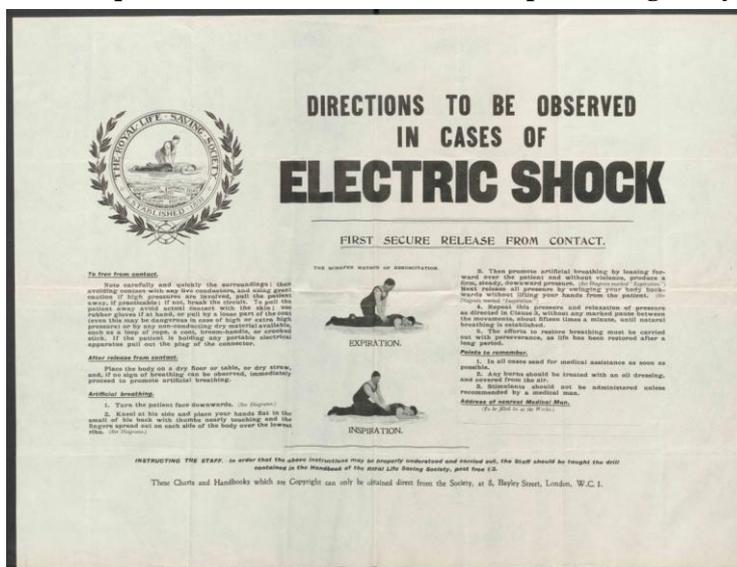
³³ The Late Mr Henry. (24.03.1928). The Brisbane Courier. p21.



Royal Charter of Incorporation

The Royal Life Saving Society was an unincorporated association from its inception. To become an incorporated association a Royal Charter of Incorporation was required. On the 7th August 1923 the Society's solicitors presented a Petition, with draft Charter, to the Privy Council. The Petition was signed by Lord Desborough (President), Lord Amphill, Viscount Knutsford, Lord Leverhulme, Sir William Bull (Society's solicitor), Professor Sir Edward Sharpey Schafer, Harry J Barclay (Honorary Treasurer), Guy M Campbell, Margaret Ewart, Robert Sandon, William Watts, Jos Watts, Wilma Yarborough Lewis and William Henry (Chief Secretary and Vice President). Keeper of the Privy Purse for King George V, Sir Frederick Ponsonby wrote to the Privy Council on the 30th August 1923 to advise "... the King has always taken a great interest in this Society and that His Majesty will certainly continue his Patronage. I think I can even say that the King would be glad if a Royal Charter could be given to the Royal Life-Saving Society".

His Majesty, on the 28th November 1923, ordered the Petition be referred to a Committee of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council and after consideration report back to His Majesty. The Home Office, the Admiralty, Royal National Life Boat Institution, War Office and Order of St John had no objection to the proposed Charter. The Board of Trade, Board of Education and Charity Commission made a number of observations that they considered warranted attention. From January to April 1924 amendments were undertaken to the draft Charter, and to even supplying an Electric Shock poster, shown below, (originally produced at the request of the Home Office) in support of its Charter; that the Society's objects are chiefly limited to natation but the treatment of a person suffering from electric shock or suffocation was precisely the same and this poster had "... been the means of preventing many deaths".



The Clerk of the Privy Council advised the Society, on the 3rd July 1924, "... that the King was pleased, at a Council held on the 25th June last, to approve the grant of the Charter prayed for". A letter from the Home Office, dated the 19th July 1924, advised the Charter of Incorporation was granted and the Charter was dated the 14th July 1924.

Due to the re-organisation of the Society Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on the 27th January 1960, granted a supplemental Charter of Incorporation creating the new Commonwealth organisation with five National Branches: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.



St Edward's Crown

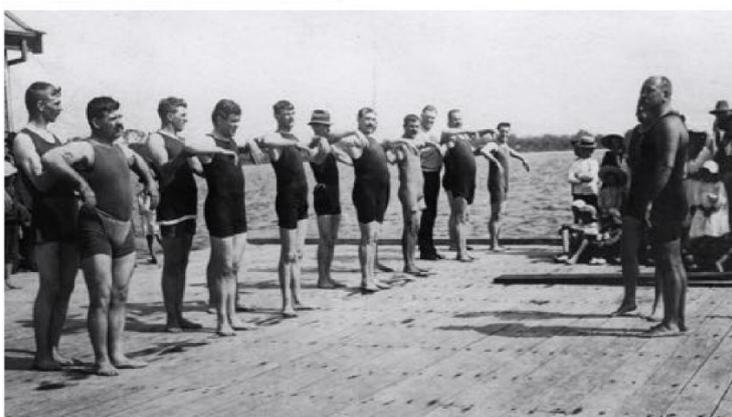
The proposal for the use of the Crown was first put forward by Canada and Australia. The 'E.R.' file notes at the time stated "... in view of the very close connection between the Royal Family and the Society and of the interest which The Queen takes in its activities throughout the Commonwealth, she would be agreeable to ... giving permission to the Society to use the Crown...".

On the 27th February 1964 the Home Office advised the Grand President, Lord Mountbatten, The Queen approved the use of the St Edward's Crown "... by the United Kingdom Branch of the Royal Life Saving Society and by the Commonwealth Council of a badge which includes the Royal Crown for use on notepaper and envelopes, handbooks and other published material, and as the lapel badge worn by the officers of the Society and Council". The Crown had been, for a number of years, used by the Society on its Diploma award and worn on personal clothing. Her Majesty relaxed the established practice of not wearing the crown on personal clothing, for not only the Diploma award but also the Distinction awards.

Justice Sir Percy Joske, the Society's Australian President wrote to Lord Mountbatten on the 2nd April 1964 advising steps will be taken to obtain similar privilege in Australia, for use of the crown.



Christchurch, New Zealand, 1910.
William Henry poses for the camera prior to taking to the water for a demonstration.
(Photo: RLSS UK via David Browne)



Simonstown, near Cape Town, South Africa, 1913 William Henry conducting an examination of candidates for a Society award.
(Photo: RLSS UK via David Browne)



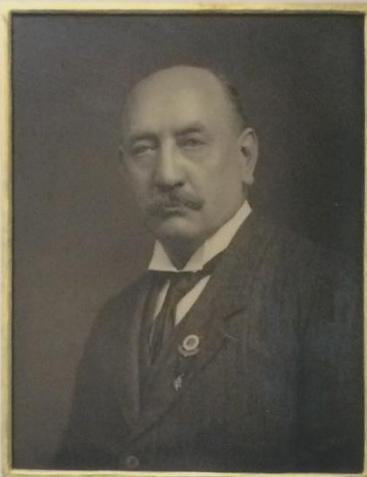


IN MEMORIAM



HUMANITY lost one of its greatest benefactors when William Henry on March 20, 1928, passed to his well-earned and final rest. Men and women, girls & boys throughout the world will never forget the debt of gratitude they owe to William Henry for founding in 1891 the Swimmers' Life Saving Society. With the idealism and imagination of the true artist and the untiring zeal of the fanatic William Henry taught mankind that swimming meant something more than mere water-pot-hunting, it could, by knowledge and practice become an aesthetic art whereby its recreative and health-giving joys become still more pleasurable & delightful. He proved that saving life from drowning could be confidently undertaken by any one who mastered eight simple drills: three for release from the clutches of the drowning person and five for bringing the patient, whether passive or struggling, to safety. Gathering around him a small band of enthusiasts, Henry started his crusade by lecturing on and demonstrating the eight drills to Swimming Clubs and Schools. Interest was aroused and very shortly "The Life Saving Society" with proper Officers and Executive, came into being. A system of Awards was instituted. In 1892, 86 Certificates were granted. Last year the number was 45,549. To-day the Diploma of the Society is regarded as the Blue Ribbon of the Swimming World.

In 1904 Royalty was so satisfied with the work Henry and the Society were doing, that the late King Edward VII graciously conferred the title "Royal". Branches were gradually formed not only throughout the Empire, but in Foreign Countries as well, and in the Empire alone there are now close on half-a-million certificated Life Savers helping to spread the good work.



WILLIAM HENRY
 Founder & Chief Secretary, Royal Life Saving Society

Henry did not forget the afflicted. People with only one arm or one leg as well as the blind were all helped. One of the earliest demonstrations in 1891 was given in the bath of the Royal Normal College for the Blind, Norwood, and to date forty-eight pupils hold the

Certificate and seventeen the Medallion of the Society.

The result is that to-day the Blind throughout the English-speaking world are being taught the delights of Swimming & Life-saving.

In addition to possessing a pleasing personality Henry was a splendid organiser, and one of the finest all round swimmers in the World. This ability to demonstrate practically in salt water or fresh, fully dressed or clad in swimming costume only, what he talked about made him uniquely fitted to fill the very onerous position of Chief Secretary.

At the request of the Executive, Henry visited not only nearly every swimming bath in the United Kingdom, but Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Germany, the U.S.A.

and other Countries, lecturing, teaching and consolidating "THE CAUSE". Kings, Princes, Presidents, Governors, and the General Public extended a patronage and welcome seldom granted to a Commoner.

If all those who venerate the memory of William Henry will prove their sincerity by imitating his example in teaching and spreading the knowledge of swimming and life-saving to which he so strenuously and unselfishly devoted forty years of his life, then they too may hope, when called home, to hear as we are sure did he, the words "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

G.M.C.



Australia

24th February 1892 saw the establishment of the first lifesaving class in Australia by the Wentworth Swimming Club. The New South Wales Branch was formed in 1894; one of the first two branches formed under the authority of the newly established Life Saving Society. In 1899, a Life Saving Brigade was formed at Manly, Sydney. Daylight bathing restrictions on Sydney beaches were lifted in 1903. Warrant Officer John Bond, an instructor with the Colonial Defence Corps, and Dr Reuter Roth were instrumental in the promotion of the Society’s work in New South Wales, by encouraging bathers to their classes.

Other states and territories Branches followed:

Victoria	1903;	Queensland	1905;
South Australia	1909;	Tasmania	1915;
Western Australia	1924;	Northern Territory	1965; and
Australian Capital Territory	1975.		

Most early swimming, especially around Sydney, took place in the local surf. Royal life savers John Bond, Lyster Ormsby and others perceived the need for devising methods of rescue specially suited to rough water conditions. They are accredited with the invention of the surf reel and line.³⁴ The older Surf life saving clubs (of today) were originally Royal life saving clubs.

Royal gave birth to Surf: Surfers gathered at the Sydney Sports Club and formed the Surf Bathers’ Association of New South Wales on the 18th October 1907. As the name would suggest, it was a social association and a number of subjects were discussed, including the most publicised concern of surf bathers’ requirements to wear skirts, over their neck-to-knee costumes. Some clubs however, were more concerned with the lifesaving aspects of their club than having amenities. Some clubs were closely associated with local swimming clubs. The new association’s objects however were; a) to encourage surf bathing; b) study and practice methods of lifesaving; and c) to promote and arrange classes for lifesaving instruction.³⁵ The Bathers Association, in 1922, changed its name to the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia and then to Surf Life Saving Australia in 1991.

In the early days of the Surf Bathers’ Association members had to do their RLSS certificates. The Proficiency Certificate of the Society was a compulsory requirement for admission to a surf club, while the new surf bronze was optional until the mid-1920s. The first surf bronze medallion squad was put through in 1910. The Society and the Association worked closely together. In April 1913 the Society’s New Zealand Branch wrote to the Surf Bathers’ Association of NSW pointing out the advantages of carrying a patient face down. It took until January 1926 until this carry method for patients, still used today, become operative in Surf Life Saving Association, Australia.³⁶

The Agreement: As with tensions between a parent and child, so too tensions were mounting between the Society and the Association. In December 1924 however, an agreement was reached between the Society and the Surf Association, in Australia, whereby Surf would be responsible for ocean beaches and the Society for all other waterways. After the 1924 agreement the Society in

³⁴ Biggest Surf Carnival. (20.03.1915) Saturday Referee and the Arrow. p1.

³⁵ Maxwell, C. (1949). Surf: Australians Against the Sea. pp31-33.

³⁶ Ibid. pp49-56.



Australia focused on water safety, education and rescue training for non-surf beaches.

Today the Society operates as Australia's leading water safety educator and non-profit volunteer community service organisation conducting, Australia wide, courses in water safety, swimming, lifesaving, resuscitation, lifeguarding and first aid. Not only junior development but also youth programs, club development, competition, facility management, facility safety audits and mature adult programs, such as the Grey Medallion.³⁷

Royal and Surf, in Australia today, have a far more cordially and co-operative relationship. Royal patrolling clubs, on non-surf beaches, operate within the surf communications network as part of a lifeguarding team. Also, on a national level, both organisations were involved in the establishment of the Australian Water Safety Council. The combination of both Royal and Surf competitors within the one Australian team, for international competitions, further cements the strong ties between both organisations.

Queensland: After a couple of attempts to establish a Society Branch in Queensland, it wasn't until 23rd October 1905 that the Queensland Branch was formed. The first lifesaving club affiliated with the new Queensland Branch, in December 1905, was the Rockhampton Swimming Club. When Frank Venning arrived in 1908 and within a few years had injected much needed enthusiasm into the Queensland life saving movement. Frank Venning, at William Henry's invitation, joined the Society (in the United Kingdom) in 1894 after rescuing a couple from a boating accident. He was a member of a demonstration squad that toured the United Kingdom during the mid to late 1890s. Frank Venning is known as the father of life saving in Queensland (both Royal and Surf).

With the 1924 Royal and Surf agreement, the Society in Queensland was instrumental in forming the Queensland Surf Head Centre in 1930 and even supported Queensland Surf in its first year by allowing it to share its office space and telephone. Co-operation continued in Queensland for many years and for three years, from 1958 to 1961, Jack Spender was president of both Surf Life Saving (3 years) and Royal Life Saving (17 years).

Since 1905 more than 1.2 million Queenslanders have received accreditation in the Society's award program. During the year ended 30th June 2016 there were 145,782 awards issued.

Women: From the Society's inception women have always been a part of the Society, worldwide, and enjoyed full membership and participation, as evident by the awards gained by women. William Henry was determined to ensure both boys and girls gained lifesaving skills.

The Surf association was very archaic in its attitude towards women. They did join as social members and even completed exam conditions for awards, but received no awards; as was the case with Edie Kieft in 1923. In 1980 three women passed their SLSA test to be allowed to compete in a surf competition and welcomed as active members. Allegedly, due to declining male membership women were finally allowed to join, in 1980. It was not until the early 1990s until women were allowed to complete in the full range of disciplines in competition.³⁸

³⁷ www.RLSSQ.com.au.

³⁸ Tipton, M. & Wooler, A. (2016). The Science of Beach Lifeguarding.p22.



Trouble in Paradise: The rebellious nature of New South Welshmen wasn't confined to surf lifesavers. In the early days all Australian Royal awards had to be submitted to London for approval. After the war a 'new guard' and 'old guard' were forming within the Society's NSW executive. A deep division developed due to the perceived need to have autonomy from London and to have Australian award conditions. It was seen as schoolteachers were coming into Royal; more than likely because the leader of the group, George Turnbull, and his mates were schoolteachers and keen to get lifesaving into schools. Also, other states saw the breakaway as a tactic to gain more government funding, which was starting to find its way into lifesaving.



When the Australian Life Saving Society was formed, in 1950, only three NSW clubs elected to stay with RLSS-NSW. George Turnbull was considered a reluctant rebel, but necessary to secure autonomy. The new association's first aim was to write an Australian manual.

Lord Mountbatten, Grand President and Captain Hale, Chief Secretary, came to Australia to meet RLSS officials and to attend the special conference convened in April 1956 by the National Council, in Melbourne. The breakaway group believed, apparently, he was in Australia to see them 'to point out the errors of their ways'. Before the conference he convened meetings with the two groups and ALSS would not negotiate on matters such as demand for autonomy and the issue of an Australian Manual of Life Saving. Reunion was achieved in November 1956.³⁹

National Branch: Interestingly the first Australian conference of state head centres was held in 1919. At the 21st Victorian conference, on the 10th December 1925, it was proposed, and passed, to amalgamate all the Australian Branches into one Federal governing body, to be known as the Australian and New Zealand Lifesaving Society. The New Zealand delegate, Mr E S Evans, took exception at the term 'Australasian'. It was decided it was "far better to let them [NZ] rule themselves".⁴⁰ The formation of the Federal Council was confirmed by the Central Council in London, and at the Society conference in Melbourne on the 19th November 1934 at which Mr H H Lock, of the Central Council presided, he advised the Society in London was in favour of the new Federal Council. The Australian National Branch (as opposed to a Federal Council) was formed in 1959 and is based in Sydney.

Commonwealth

After 1914 the Society had begun to move towards a commonwealth of nations, without success.

An Empire conference with representatives from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom and India was held 28-29th July 1933. One issued discussed at this conference was the importance of uniform standards of efficiency in the gaining of the Society's awards.⁴¹

The Australian 'story' for autonomy no doubt stimulated the London Head Centre of the Society to re-evaluate the international structure of RLSS. The proposed new management structure was for a Commonwealth Council with autonomy to the Society in each (co-operating) national

³⁹ Downes, J. (1994). Royal Life: A History of The Royal Life Saving Society-Australia. pp73-84.

⁴⁰ RLSS 21st Annual Conference. (11.12.1925). The Age. p14.

⁴¹ Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p30.



branch – London, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Many branches had built an infrastructure of their own and in 1955 it was resolved to form the Society into five self-governing national branches in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.⁴²

At the 68th Annual General Meeting in London held on the 30th May 1959, Lord Mountbatten and others had to hold the ‘old guard’ to ransom (by threat of resignation) if the proposal was not accepted. Lord Mountbatten at this meeting is quoted as saying, “There can be no doubt that since its foundation in 1891 our Society has done a magnificent job for humanity, but its growth as a Commonwealth-wide body has made its present organisation completely out of date. While change is often a matter of regret, I believe there will be few, if any, members who will not welcome the changes which we are now about to make, and which will enable our Society to go forward to even greater success in the future than it has had in the past”. He further said, in closing the meeting, “This concludes the most historic meeting since the original meeting founding the Society. I believe that the reason why the governments have given us grants is because the Prime Ministers in each case appreciate that societies like ours, which have a voluntary association between the various parts of the Commonwealth, form some of the strongest ties that keep the Commonwealth together. It is far more important than just an act of lifesaving; it is the common purpose, the common title, and now the common overall organisation of the Commonwealth Council. So I think today we have written a page in Commonwealth history and all of us who have been associated with it can feel very proud.”⁴³

With this change of structure, the Charter of the Society required amending. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II granted a supplemental Charter of Incorporation, dated the 27th January 1960, creating the new Commonwealth organisation with five National Branches: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

The first Commonwealth Council meeting was held in 1961, accepting the new structure and thus establishing the international operation of the Royal Life Saving Society.

It was agreed, at the 1976 conference, to change the titles of Grand President and Deputy Grand President to Commonwealth President and Deputy Commonwealth President.

At the 1986 Commonwealth Conference the Commonwealth Secretariat was created and a Chief Secretary was appointed, independent of RLSS-UK.



Earl Mountbatten of Burma

⁴² Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p38.

⁴³ Ibid. pp41-42.



Handbook of Instruction

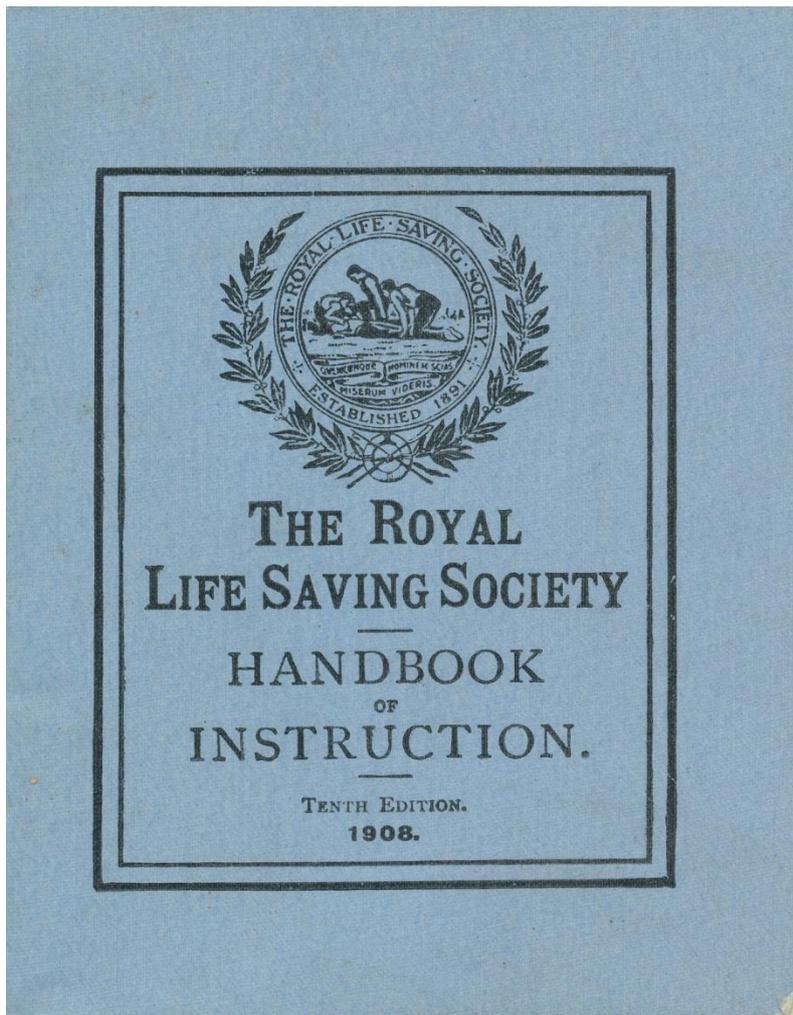
The Society acted quickly to promote its message effectively and professionally by producing a manual, titled *Handbook of Instruction*, late in its first year: 1891.

William Wilson, Chairman of the Associated Swimming Clubs of Scotland, encouraged the art of swimming and wrote a number of books, including *Swimming, Diving, and How to Save Life* (1876) and *The Swimming Instructor: a Treatise on the Arts of Swimming and Diving* (1883). Both books have chapters on resuscitation and saving life from drowning.

A system of drill, developed by William Wilson, was presented to the newly formed Life Saving Society and was eagerly adopted. It was a simple land-based drill that could then be perfectly practised in the water. Land drills were considered very satisfactory for the initial instruction.

William Wilson offered his drill to the Society. The Society adopted four methods of rescue and three methods of releases for releasing oneself from the grip of a drowning person.

William Wilson was recognised for his services and was awarded the first Life Governor of the Society.



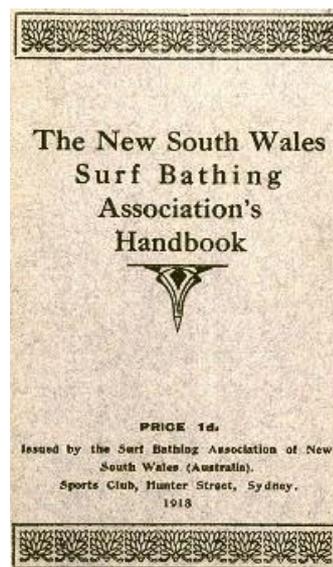
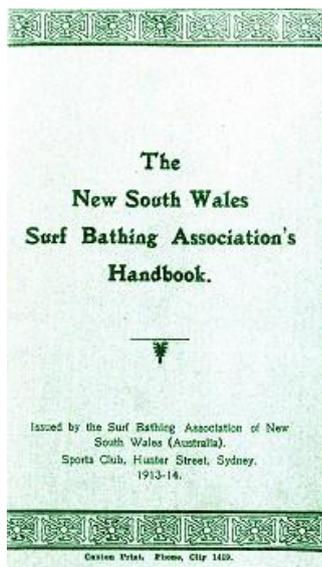
The tenth edition of the Society's manual, to the left, was produced in 1908, and is shown as the actual size of the early pocket-sized manuals. The manuals were continually produced, for worldwide distribution, from the first edition in 1891 to the twenty-second edition in 1955, with reprints of the 22nd edition going into the 1960s.

In 1955, Australia produced its first manual, *Handbook of Instruction*, by using the RLSS 22nd edition.

Canada followed in 1959 by producing its first manual, with the same title. The United Kingdom Branch's first manual in 1963 was titled: *Illustrated Handbook of Life Saving Instruction*.

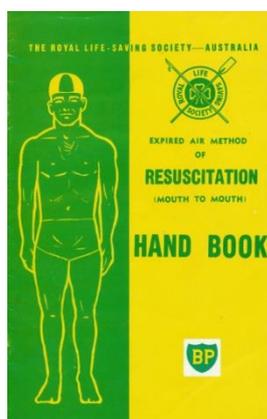
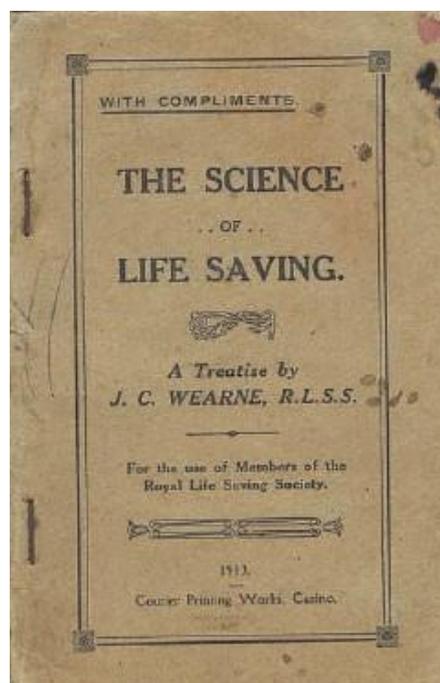


To their credit and no doubt the need to be independent and to move further away from the Society, the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia acted within a few years of forming in 1907, and clearly moving focus from bathing and dress codes to surf lifesaving, published its first manual in 1909. This was the first manual of its kind to consider the unique Australian conditions. To quote from the SLSA 5th edition manual (1923, p5): “No organisation in existence at that time would accept the responsibility of the work, as the conditions were so typically Australian, and as the other organisations were controlled from outside sources, it could not be expected that they would readily understand the purely local conditions which prevailed here”. This statement was aimed at the Society not only in New South Wales but also the United Kingdom.

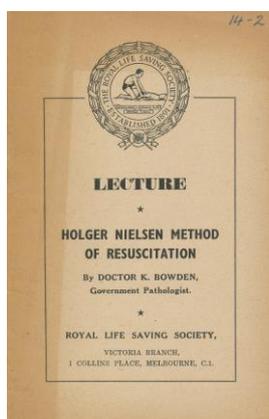


Surf Bathers' Association of NSW 2nd & 3rd editions (source: surfsearch.com.au)

Australia however, was active in producing publications, such as the small publication (at right) from the NSW Branch of the Society, in 1913. The NSW Branch also produced a ten page booklet titled: *Hand book of rules and by-laws/Life Saving Society of New South Wales* in 1896.



16 page booklet, 1961

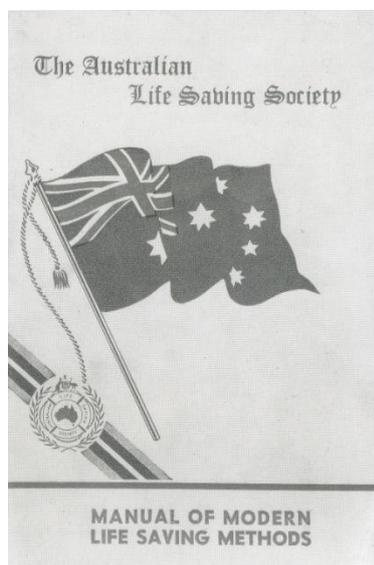


29 page booklet, c1952

For the 1908-1909 season the Queensland Branch, on behalf of the new Surf Bathers' Association of New South Wales, drew up and published a chart: *Hints to Surf Bathers*.

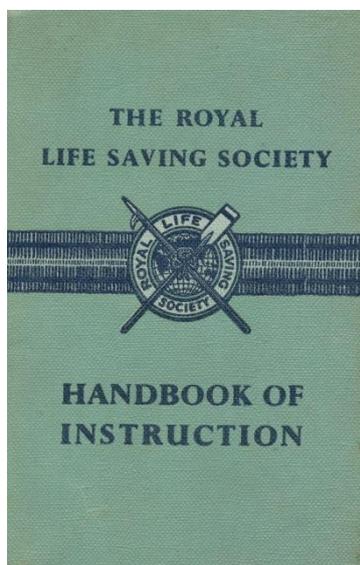


With the formation of the new group, Australian Life Saving Society, the first aim was to write an Australian manual. For three years George Turnbull, Bill Blakeney, Frank Henry and Frank Whitebrook wrote the new manual. The 128 page manual was published in 1953. The *Sydney Morning Herald*⁴⁴ reported more than 5,000 manuals had been distributed and the Australian Life Saving Society had distributed 18,000 proficiency awards.⁴⁵

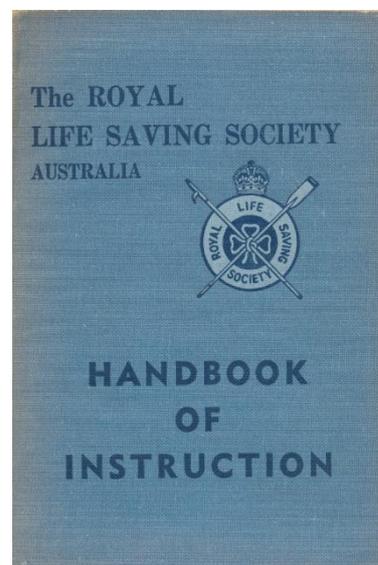


ALSS only edition, 1953

(Photo: 'Royal Life')



RLSS 22nd edition, 1955



RLSS-Aust 1st edition, 1955

Interestingly, the Australian Life Saving Society was based in Sydney and appears only to be involved in New South Wales. Their manual was published in Sydney, whereas the Society's first manual, referred to as the 'First Australian Edition' and published by the Royal Life Saving Society, Australia, Collins Place, Melbourne, Victoria. The battle of the states continues! It would be suggested this first edition (cover above at right) was an attempt by the royalists in Victoria (and Tasmania, as Doug Plaister, a British Empire Loyalist, was outraged at the breakaway group) to counter the new group's manual and thus publish an Australian conditions manual. Note the crown within the RLSS logo on the Society's Australian manual, before it was approved in the United Kingdom in 1964. The Society's Australian manual (206 pages) content was very similar to the Society's Commonwealth publication (186 pages). The Australian version removed references to rescues within frozen lakes, the lifeguard league, UK competition conditions and other minor items. It also added more diagrams, especially within the scientific swimming section.

After negotiation, the reunion of the Australian Life Saving Society and the NSW Branch of the Society was achieved in November 1956. With this reunion the first all Australian manual of the Society in Australia, *Modern Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving* (165 pages) was published in 1957.



⁴⁴ Big Demand for Lifesaving Book. (06.11.1954). Sydney Morning Herald. p4.

⁴⁵ New Lifesaving Manual. (19.02.1954). Sydney Morning Herald. p9.

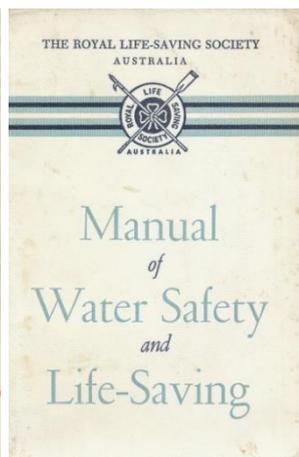


The Society's Australian headquarters was listed at Collins Place, Melbourne. Interestingly this manual displayed a logo with the Holger Nielsen method of resuscitation; a change from the Schaefer method previously used, as shown on page three. Frank Henry, George Turnbull and Frank Whitebrook were acknowledged for their work in compiling the new manual. The manual, for the first time, included black and white photographs, improved diagrams and charts. Further editions of this manual changed the logo to the type known today.

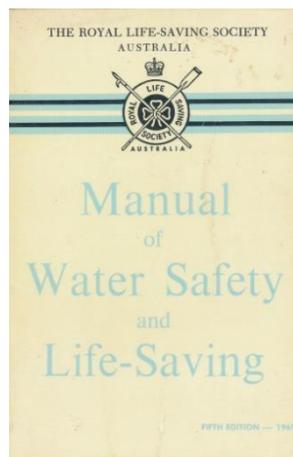
During the 1960s and 1970s the manual had a small title change: *Manual of Water Safety and Life-saving*.



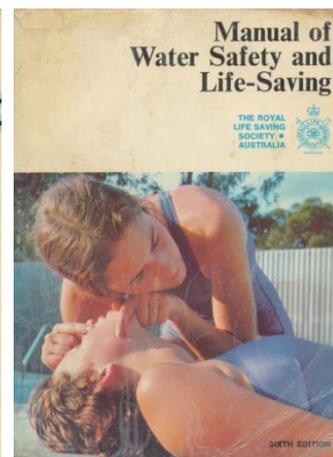
6th edition, 1962



4th edition, 1963



5th edition, 1968



6th edition, 1976

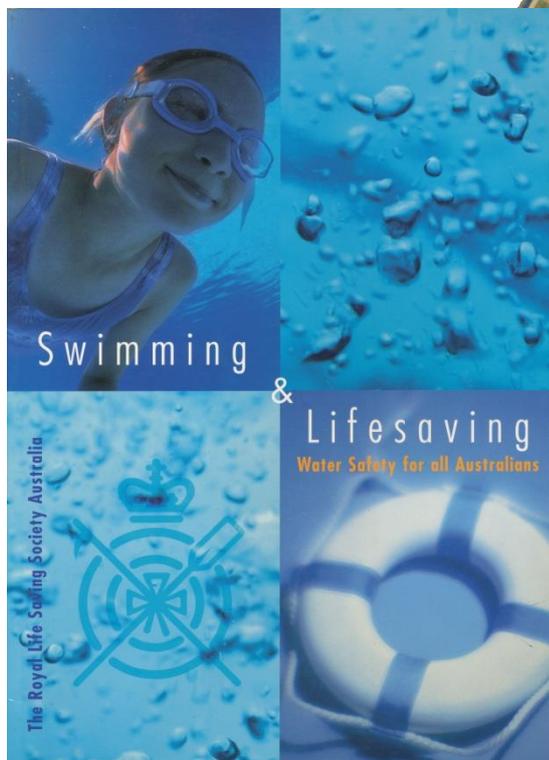
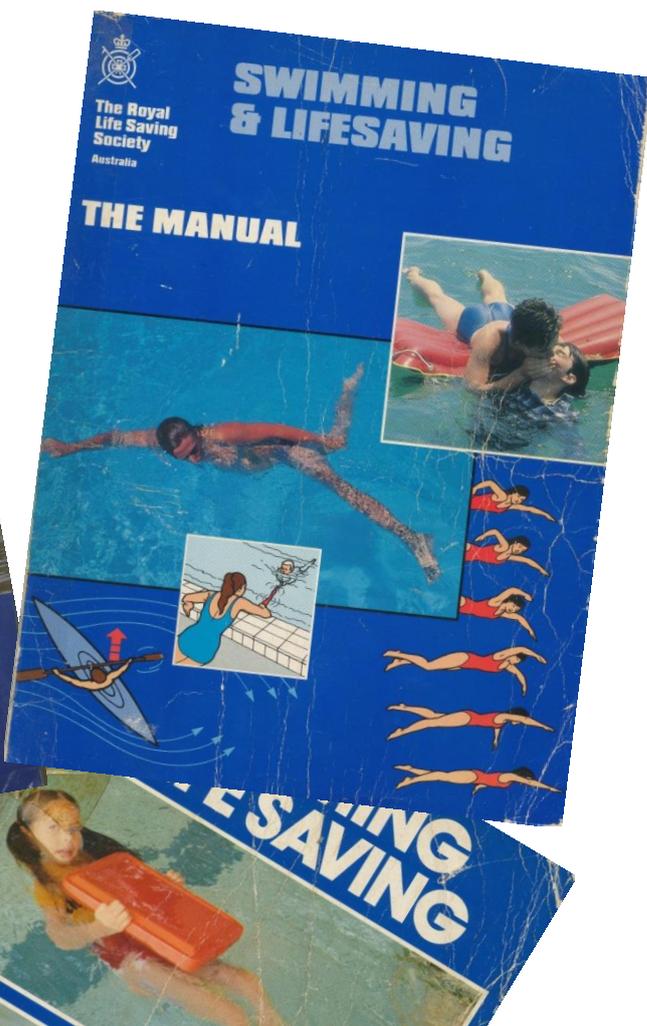
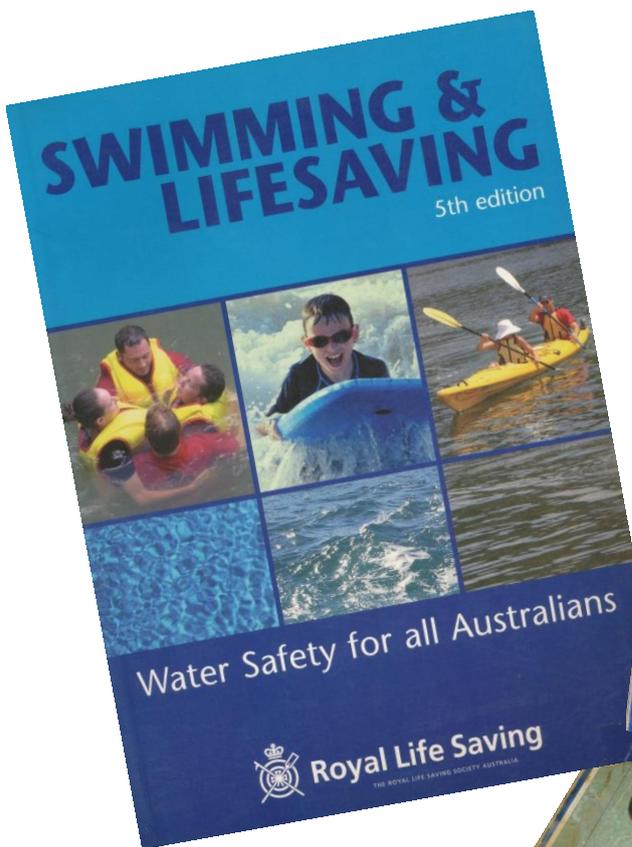
The sixth edition in 1962 of the *Modern Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving*, above left, was re-edition as a 1962 reprint of the third edition of the renamed *Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving*, when the fourth edition of 1963 was published.

The sixth edition in 1976 included the Sub-Aqua Bronze Medallion, for the first time. The Reel & Line Medallion had been included since the first manual in 1957. Due to an agreement between Royal and Surf, the Society could not have the word 'surf' on their sea water Bronze Medallion award. Accordingly, the Society's sea water award changed to the Reel and Line Bronze Medallion.

With the publication of the next series of manuals in 1982, titled *Swimming & Life Saving*, saw a complete revision of the award system within Australia; adding the innovative 'Swim & Survive' group of awards. This group of awards provided a balanced, step-by-step, easy to follow water safety program, ideally aimed at primary school children.

The award system continually improved and expanded with exceptional publications, leading to on-line training. Awards such as infant aquatics, lifeguarding, pool operations and workplace & vocational level awards being added to the international standard of the Society's awards in Australia.





Older Lifesaving Awards

	RLSS 1908	RLSS 1910	RLSS 1931	RLSS 1932	RLSS 1937
<u>Manual year:</u>	1908	1910	1931	1932	1937
<u>Edition:</u>	10th	11th	18th	19th	20th
Resuscitation Certificate (1935)					x
Senior Resuscitation Certificate					
Advance Resuscitation Certificate					
Safe Swimmer's Certificate					
Survival Certificate					
Water Safety					
Safety Awards					
Elementary Certificate	x	x	x	x	x
Proficiency Certificate	x	x	x		
Unigrip Rescue Certificate					
Intermediate Certificate				x	x
Intermediate Star					
Bar to Intermediate Star					
Bronze Star					
Bar to Bronze Star					
BRONZE MEDALLION (1892)	x	x	x	x	x
Bar to Bronze Medallion (1932)				x	x
Reel & Line Bronze Medallion					
Bar to Reel & Line Bronze Med.					
Sub-Aqua Bronze Medallion					
Bronze Cross (1945)					
Bar to Bronze Cross					
Teacher's Certificate	x	x	x		
Scholar-Instructor's Certificate					
Instructor's Certificate	x	x	x		
Reel & Line Instructor's Cert.					
Sub-Aqua Instructor's Certificate					
2nd Class Instructor's Certificate				x	x
1st Class Instructor's Certificate				x	x
Examiner's Certificate					
Award of Merit (1908)	x	x	x	x	x
Bar to award of Merit (1935)					x
Distinction Award (1952)					
Sea-Water Diploma (1936)					x
Diploma (1896)	x	x	x	x	x
Lifeguard Proficiency (1946)					





1966 postage stamp – 75th Anniversary



1944 Bronze



1994 postage stamp – 100 years in Australia



Award of Merit awards from 1918 to 1966



Reel & Line Bronze



Bronze Cross with Bars



1990s Cross



Various Stars



Square medal - 23.3.1930⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Author's interpretation of Latin inscription: "It is good to save others".



The Bronze Medallion

“The great aim of those who promoted the Life-saving Society was to raise swimming above mere level of a competitive sport, and to make its practice of use and benefit to the nation at large.”⁴⁷



The Bronze Medallion award made up the majority of the Society’s awards in the first eighty to one hundred years. With new award structures and new awards in recent times the Bronze Medallion still records high participation rates of the Society awards and also is still an award that is held in high esteem and the one true award that denotes a true lifesaver.

The danger of a large number of awards is that they may become meaningless. The Society has never fallen into this trap and all their awards have kept their prestige and have never been issued as a matter of course.⁴⁸

The Early Bronze Medallion

The Balmain Swimming Club in Sydney recorded 88 candidates in 1892, 207 in 1893 and 334 in 1894 passed the Society’s examination and gained their Bronze Medallion. Twenty-four candidates were women.⁴⁹

The examination for the ‘proficiency medal’, as the Bronze Medallion was then called, required the candidate to be able to swim and attend at least ten meetings of a class of instruction. The subjects of the examination were:

- a) Knowledge of the contents of the Society’s handbook;
- b) Efficiency in the drills for rescue and releasing one’s self from the clutch of a drowning person to be demonstrated on land and in the water; and
- c) Resuscitation and then treatment after natural breathing has been restored.⁵⁰

The land drill of the training squad was carried out as per the British Army’s *Infantry Drill Book*. There were four rescue methods and three release methods.

⁴⁷ Sinclair, A., & Henry, W. (1916). *Swimming*. p213.

⁴⁸ Pearsall, R. (1991). *Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years*. p24.

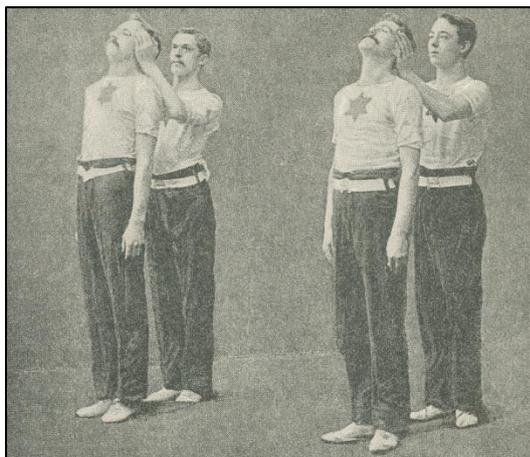
⁴⁹ *Swimming*. (10.04.1895) Referee, Sydney. p7.

⁵⁰ Sinclair, A., & Henry, W. (1893). *Swimming*. p217.

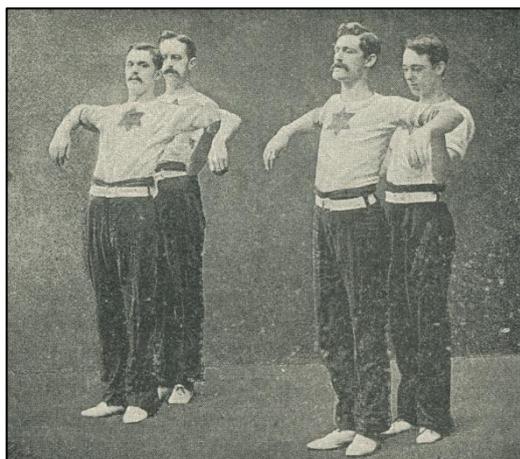


The four original Rescue methods (initial land drill) were:

First Method



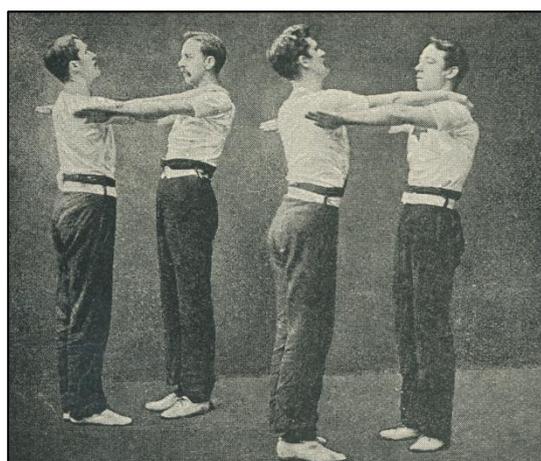
Second Method



Third Method

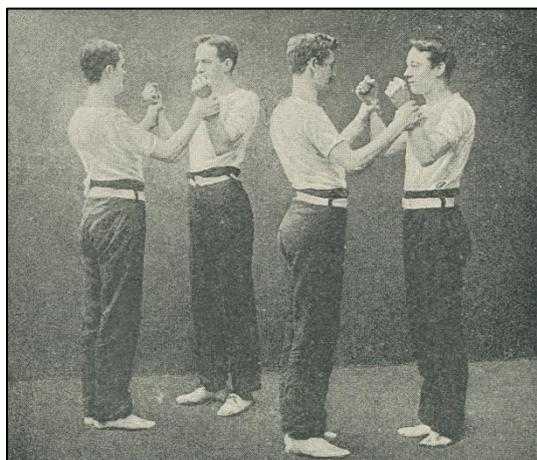


Fourth Method

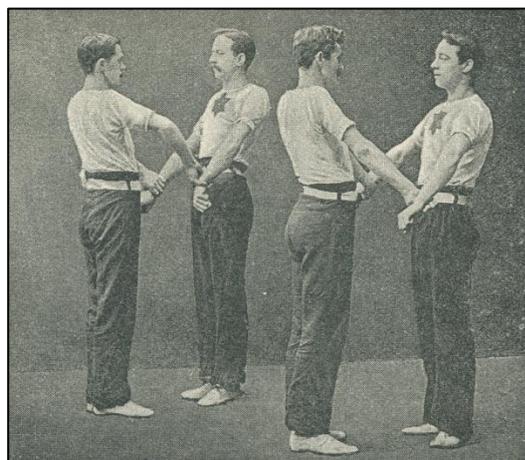


The three early Releases (initial land drill) were:

Method One – step one



- step two



Method Two



Method Three



The Silvester method of resuscitation (introduced by Dr Henry Silvester in 1861) was the method recommended by the Society. The other two methods of the time were also taught; Marshall Hall and Howard.



The Silvester Method⁵¹

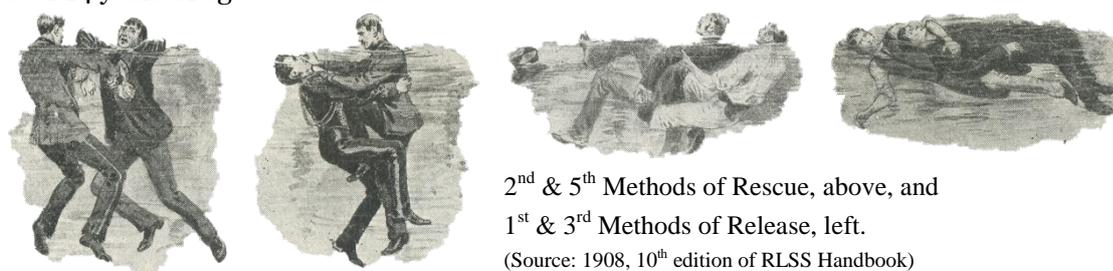
⁵¹ Photos on this and the previous page sourced from Sinclair & Henry publication, Swimming (1916).



1900 to 1950

The tenth edition of the *Handbook of Instruction* in 1908 lists the Bronze as the ‘The Proficiency Bronze Medallion’. From the eleventh edition in 1910 the Bronze is simply ‘The Bronze Medallion’, being one of seven of the Society’s awards. They were, in order of difficulty: Elementary Certificate; Proficiency Certificate; Bronze Medallion; The Teacher’s Certificate; Honorary Instructor’s Certificate; The Award of Merit; and The Diploma.

The Bronze Medallion award examination curriculum had changed little, except for another method of rescue (the fifth) and the replacement of the Silvester method of resuscitation with the Schafer method of resuscitation, which was adopted by the Society in 1907. Four methods of rescue was only required however, for the examination. The candidate could choose either the third or fifth rescue method. The theory part of the test was restricted to Parts I (Rescue and Releases) and II (Resuscitation) of the Handbook. Patients had to be towed at least 20 yards and candidates were required to demonstrate a dive from the surface of the water for an object on the bottom of the water. Plunging and scientific swimming were confined to the higher awards of the Society. Also the candidates had to be over 15 years of age and hold the Proficiency Certificate. The eighteenth edition (1931) of the *Handbook of Instruction* stated the candidate’s age must be over 14 years of age.



2nd & 5th Methods of Rescue, above, and
1st & 3rd Methods of Release, left.
(Source: 1908, 10th edition of RLSS Handbook)

The Silvester method of resuscitation required the victim to be on their back and by raising the victim’s arms above their head; air was induced into their lungs. The arms were then brought down to be pressed onto the chest, thus causing the air to be exhaled.

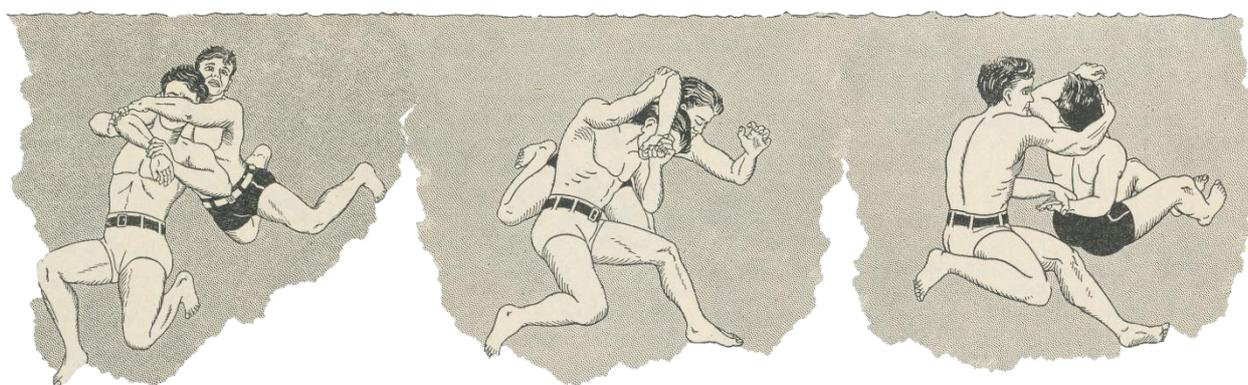
The Schaefer method of resuscitation, devised in 1897, was similar to Marshall Hall’s method. The victim was laid face down with the head turned to one side and arms above the head (or one kept alongside the body). The resuscitator would kneel alongside the victim and place their hands on the victim’s back, so as to cover the lung area. With a rocking motion the resuscitator would apply pressure to the lungs and cause them to exhale. Once the pressure was relaxed the lungs would inflate and suck in air.

The first edition of the *Surf Life Saving Handbook* under the new name of the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia was in 1923, being the fifth edition of the Association. Not as well structured as the Society’s manual, its awards included the Qualifying Certificate, Proficiency Certificate, Proficiency Bronze Medallion and Instructor’s Certificate. The handbook included a rescue & resuscitation drill, release & rescue drill, resuscitation drill and a squad of six using the reel and line for the surf medallion test. Candidates for the surf medallion could not be under 16 years of age. The age limited decreased to 15 years in the late 1940s. With the issue of their sixth edition in 1926 (two years after the Royal and Surf agreement), the Proficiency Bronze Medallion name was changed to Surf Bronze Medallion.



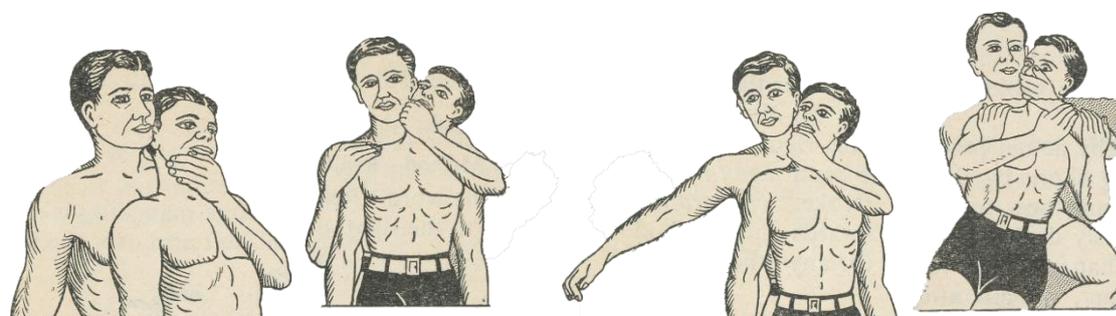
The twentieth edition (1937) of the handbook was issued five years after the nineteenth edition and included a swim for the Bronze Medallion test, for the first time. The swim was a distance of 100 yards breaststroke followed by 50 yards backstroke (without the use of arms). Also the surface dive, in the examination, had depth range of five to six feet and a requirement to bring the object recovered back to land by the first method of rescue.

In 1946, the twenty-first edition of the handbook still had the five rescue and three release methods. Rescues were named: 'when not struggling' (first method); 'the arm grip' (second method); 'arms difficult to hold' (third method); 'help with passive' (fourth method); 'rescue by use of side stroke' (fifth method). A sixth rescue method was added; the 'unigrip' method, used as another carry with the rescuer using sidestroke and having the ability to restrain the patient, if necessary. Also, another release method was added. The releases were: 'held by the wrists' (first method); 'held by the neck' (second method); 'clutched round the body and arms' (third method); and 'clutched round the body from behind' (fourth method).



The newest release – clutched round the body from behind. (Source: 1946, 21st edition of RLSS Handbook)

The candidate had to demonstrate the 'unigrip' method of rescue with a 20 yard carry, incorporating 'restraint' techniques in the carry. The swim test had increased to 150 yards breaststroke and 150 yards backstroke (without the use of arms). Also various rescues and releases were combined.



The newest rescue – unigrip including supplementary restraint at right. (Source: 1946, 21st edition of RLSS Handbook)

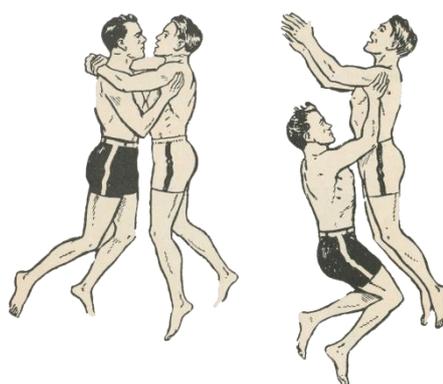


1951 to 1981

The twenty-second edition of 1955 saw the resuscitation method change from Schafer to the Holger-Nielsen method. From about 1907, a Dutch army officer, Holger Nielsen, was devising a new method, which was refined in 1932 to using only one rescuator. Similar to the Schaefer Method with the victim on their front and head turned to one side, the victim head however, was resting on their back of their hands. After pressure to the victim's back, the rescuator (kneeling above the victim's head) raises the victim's elbows, thus forcing air to return to the lungs.

Also, the number of rescues decreased from six to five, with the omission of the 'rescue by use of sidestroke' (the previous fifth method).

The Society's first Australian edition (1955) was similar to the twenty-second edition of the Society in London. However, the Australian added the 'rescue by use of side stroke' and another technique for the 'clutched around the body and arms' release.

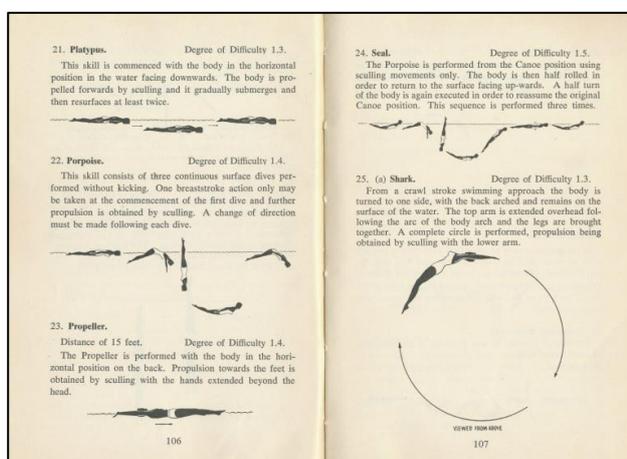


The newest release – clutched around the body and arms. (Source: 1955, 1st edition of RLSSA Handbook)

Scientific swimming was still in use for the higher awards (Bronze Cross and higher). Also, the age condition for the Bronze Medallion was reduced from over 14 years, in the London edition, to over 13 years of age in the Australian edition. Otherwise the examination conditions were similar.

A milestone was achieved in 1957 with the publication of the first 'true' Australian edition of the Society in Australia; *Modern Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving*. This was an excellent publication with many black and white photos, detailed descriptions of rescues and releases and an enlarged water safety section.

Sections were: Administration; Water Safety; Principles and Methods of Rescue; and Physiology, Resuscitation and First-Aid. Scientific swimming was also included, but was called 'water skills'. Water skills drawings were also provided in greater detail, as shown at right.



Water skills continued to be part of the Bronze Cross and higher awards examination requirements.

This new edition included methods of approaching the patient, so as to avoid the necessity of having to release oneself from the patient's grip. Rescue tows were the hip, hair, chin, clothing, tied-swimmer and double-patient carries. The manual also discussed the removal of patients from the water. Releases were hit & turn, front body and rear body. The Society's standard method of artificial respiration was the Holger Nielsen Method. Other methods were also taught; such as the Kohlrausch, Silvester and Rickard methods.

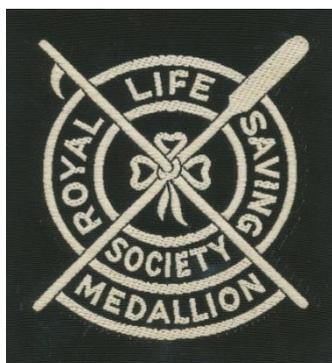
The Bronze Medallion requirements were:

- a) resuscitation;
- b) treading water for 30 seconds;
- c) recover and bring to land an object from a depth in at least seven feet of water;
- d) three rescue methods of over twenty yards;
- e) landing of patient;
- f) three releases;
- g) 440 yard swim (110 yards each of overarm stroke, sidestroke, breaststroke and backstroke without arms) within 15 minutes; and
- h) theory questions about resuscitation, first-aid and lifesaving.

The awards of the 1957 edition were, in order: Water Safety Certificate; Resuscitation Certificate; Elementary Certificate; Proficiency Certificate; Intermediate Star; Bronze Medallion (and Bar); Reel & Line Bronze Medallion (and Bar); Bronze Cross (and Bar); Award of Merit (and Bar); Instructor's Certificate; Reel & Line Instructor's Certificate; Honorary Instructor's Certificate; Examiner's Certificate; Distinction Award; and Diploma.

The 1962 edition lowered the Bronze Medallion age to at least 12 years of age, provided methods of entering the water (safe jump, shallow header and dive) and decreased the time limit for the 440 yard swim from not exceeding 15 minutes to not exceeding 13 minutes. Expired air resuscitation (EAR), external cardiac compression (ECC) and mechanical equipment was included in this edition. Two alternative methods of resuscitation were also required to be known for the Bronze Medallion examination; Silvester-Brosch and Holger Nielsen.

The very next edition in 1963 increased the Bronze Medallion age to at least 13 years of age. The



only other major difference was removing the Holger Nielsen method of resuscitation.

The next few years saw little change with the contents of the manuals. The 1969 edition saw the introduction of expired air resuscitation in water, for the Bronze Medallion examination.



The first major change was within the sixth edition of the manual in 1976, now called *Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving* (since 1963). The Intermediate Star changed its name to the Bronze Star. The distance swim for the Bronze Medallion changed from 440 yards to 400 metres. The most important change was the use of non-contact rescues in the tests of the Bronze Medallion; such as clothing and rope, to pull the patient to safety. These rescue methods however, were included in prior editions, from 1957, as part of the water safety and survival section. Support with the use of aids, rescues with the use of aids and defensive techniques, to protect the rescuer, were also added to the 1976 edition.

The 1976 edition also was the first to exclude manual resuscitation and only include resuscitation as known today; EAR, ECC and CPR. The use of resuscitation flow charts was included for the first time. The Bronze Medallion theory examination included all sections of the manual; such as personal water safety, survival, assist tows and assessment of rescue situations.

1982 to 2000s

The issue of the first edition of the *Swimming & Life Saving*, in 1982, was the start of the most exciting time of the award structure and delivery thereof for the Society in Australia. The manual was a larger book with coloured sections, to easily find the required section. Surf Life Saving Australia (name changed from Surf Life Saving Association of Australia in 1991) first used this approach in their thirty-second edition in 2003.

A teacher-based progressive assessment within the new Swim and Survive awards, Teacher of Lifesaving Award, Dry Rescue, Basic Rescue and Home Pool Safety were a number of new awards included in this edition. The Bronze Cross was removed from the award scheme, with the Award of Merit being the next award above the Bronze Medallion. Water skills were still in the manual as a part of the Award of Merit and Distinction examinations, but referred to as 'synchronised swimming figures'. At the lower end of degree of difficulty was sculling and body position which were considered necessary to assist the lifesaver to a greater awareness of balance, proficiency in control of the body in the water and improvement in propulsive efficiency.



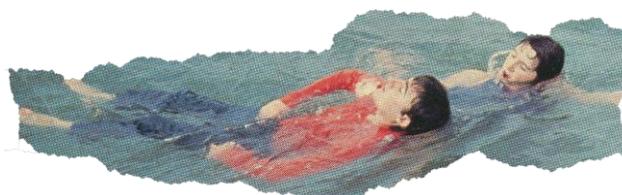
The Bronze Medallion, in this first edition, saw a major overhaul, with the introduction of six specialist categories. They were: Bronze Medallion (general); Pool Bronze Medallion; Patrol Bronze Medallion; Canoe Bronze Medallion; Boating Bronze Medallion; and Sub-Aqua Bronze Medallion.

The age requirement, for the Bronze Medallion, was increased to not be less than 15 years of age. The examination was made up of a theory test (including self preservation, water rescue safety, victim recognition and assessment, use of bystanders, emergency care and resuscitation), resuscitation test and water test. The water test did not include a timed swim; however, there was a 3 minutes and 15 seconds time limit on a 50 metre approach and 50 metre tow of a simulated unconscious patient. Surface dives were performed in approximately two metres of water. For the first time there were initiative rescue scenarios, after which the rescuer was required to explain the reasons for their actions. Also, for the first time in the Bronze Medallion examination, was the demonstration of the vice grip for immobilisation of a spinal injury, and the resuscitation test of



the Bronze Medallion was the successful completion of the conditions of the Resuscitation Award, or providing evidence of having obtained this award within the last six months (later increased to twelve months).

Rescues were the accompanied tow, non-contact tow, assisted tow and contact tow. The common contact tows were the head tow and armpit tow. Other tows were clothing tow, hair tow, double shoulder tow and cross chest tow. Defensive and escape techniques were similar to the previous manual, as were releases: escape from front grasp; escape from rear grasp; escape from a wrist grip; and escape from a leg grip.



A non-contact tow, left, and a contact tow: the armpit tow, above.
(Source: 1982, 1st edition of RLSSA Handbook; Swimming & Life Saving)

Five years later, in 1987, the second edition of the *Swimming & Lifesaving* manual was published. The Bronze Medallion was reduced to one category, the Bronze Cross award was re-introduced, an Oxygen equipment award was established and a Lifeguard strand was introduced. Synchronised swimming figures were renamed water skills and reduced to eleven types.



The new Lifeguard strand included Patrol Bronze Star, Patrol Lifeguard, Pool Lifeguard and Advanced Lifeguard. The Bronze Medallion was a prerequisite to the Patrol Lifeguard and Pool Lifeguard awards. Prior to 1987 the Bronze Medallion was the requirement for employment, in Australia, as a pool lifeguard.

Rescues and releases were similar to the previous edition. For the first time abbreviations were used as a reference to resuscitation; the ABC (airway, breathing and circulation) of resuscitation.

The Bronze Medallion age was changed again; reduced to a minimum 14 years of age or in the year the candidate turns 14. This minimum age condition is the same in New Zealand. In Canada however, the age is a minimum of 13 years. The previous United Kingdom Bronze Medallion, which ceased around 2012, age condition was 14 years. The United Kingdom's equivalent award now would be the Silver Medallion within their Survive and Save Program.

Conditions of the examination were similar to the first edition. A 400 metre swim (100 front crawl, 100 backstroke, 100 sidestroke and final 100 metres on the front) was re-introduced with a time limit of 13 minutes. Also search & rescue demonstration and survival skills demonstration (such as wearing a personal floatation device and sculling for one minute, while being clothed) were a part of the water test.



For the first time, sections of the examination were classified into ‘instructor assessed items’, ‘optional items’ (with the examiner selecting the required number to examine for each award) and ‘examiner assessed items’.

There was little change to the Bronze Medallion award conditions in the next editions (third edition in 1995 to the sixth edition reprinted in 2014).

The third edition enhances the abbreviations of resuscitation from ABC to DRABC; danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation.

The reprint of the fifth edition (version two in 2006 and reprinted in 2007) went further with the abbreviation of resuscitation by adding D, for defibrillation; DRABCD. Also, C for circulation was changed to C for compression.

Not to be outdone, the current sixth edition of 2014 changed the resuscitation abbreviation to DRSABCD; danger, response, send for help, airway, breathing, CPR, defibrillation.

The sixth edition however, included new awards within the new swim and survive strand and rebranding the awards within this strand. Workplace and vocational standard awards were also added. This excellent manual also forms a part of the broader training provision of the Society, incorporating on-line training.

The current Bronze Medallion conditions are broken into three parts; theory, resuscitation and water test. Theory, which is assessed by the instructor, covers areas such as safe water practices, survival in water, self-preservation, recognising an emergency, assessment before and during a rescue, priorities of a rescue, use of bystanders, emergency care and DRSABCD. The resuscitation section is examiner-assessed and is the same as the test for the Resuscitation Award; being a theory test and practical test comprising an initiative demonstration, performing mouth-to-mouth & mouth-to-nose resuscitation and CPR. The third section, water test, includes both instructor and examiner assessed components. Instructor-assessed components include:

1. reach rescue;
2. unweighted rope throw rescue;
3. accompanied rescue;
4. tow 25m a weak or injured swimmer (who then panics) to safety, & land the patient;
5. timed 50 metre approach & 50 metre tow of a person, within in 3 minutes & 15 seconds;
6. 400m swim (freestyle, survival backstroke, sidestroke, & breaststroke) within 13 minutes;
7. dressed in clothing perform survival skills;
8. demonstrate defensive techniques; and
9. perform a search and rescue.

Examiner-assessed components are:

10. demonstrate immobilisation of a swimmer with spinal injury;
11. recover a patient, land the patient with assistance and perform resuscitation; and
12. demonstrate an unknown initiative rescue and explain one’s actions.

The examiner also can examine any tests of the instructor assessed components, however, must examine any two components from 3, 4, 8 & 9, above.



Design

The first design of Bronze Medallions, 1892 to 1904, was a bronze circular medal, 32mm in diameter, with claw and suspension. The obverse was inscribed around the edge ‘The Life Saving Society – Established 1891’ with a rescuer towing a patient, with heads above the water line. The reverse around the edge had the Society’s motto, ‘Quemcunque Miserum Videris Hominem Scias’, with the words ‘Awarded To’ in the centre and space for the recipient’s name and date.



Early Bronze Medallions were signed (engraved) and not dated and had been gilded.



In regard to medal size, the Royal Humane Society awards in Australia were the same size as the United Kingdom – 36mm, and have remained the same size to this day.

From 1904 the obverse side of the Bronze Medallion was inscribed ‘The Royal Life Saving Society’. Older versions, without the word ‘Royal’ were also issued after this date.

Medals were put out to contract to find the best price. They were supplied by Ansley (1895 to 1900), Voughton (1900 to 1910) and J A Wylie (1910 to 1920). Bronze Medallions were supplied in red boxes and the Award of Merit in green boxes. Medals supplied in boxes were phased out by the late 1940s.



On the 2nd January 1910 five men gained the first Surf Bronze Medallion (shown at left) and another twenty gained the Bronze on the 3rd April 1910. SLSA introduced a Qualifying Certificate and Proficiency Certificate in 1921.

Around 1913 to 1919 the size of the Bronze Medallion decreased from 32mm to 30mm in diameter. Some Bronze Medallions also were supplied with no suspension ring. From 1918 the suspension ring became smaller and flat to the medal. This may have been because of the First World War.



In the late 1920s the Bronze Medallions were incorrectly produced. As shown at left, the word ‘Life’ was incorrectly spelt: ‘Lipe’. This was corrected within a year or two with all medallions after October 1928 correctly produced.





Around 1923 the Bronze Medallion wording was changed, by deleting one word; from 'The Royal Life Saving Society' to 'Royal Life Saving Society'. This is shown at left, on the 1923 Bronze Medallion medal, which is the Society's Bronze Medallion used 'with surf line'.



As previously mentioned, on page 30, as per the Royal and Surf agreement the Society was not to use the word 'surf' and thus changed their award to a Reel & Line Bronze Medallion, as shown above to the right.

From the 1930s the Bronze Medallion changed its size again; this time back to 32mm in diameter. In 1932 a bar system was introduced for holders of the Bronze Medallion to maintain their proficiency by means of subsequent re-examination.



1938 saw a major change in the design of the Bronze Medallion with a complete renovation of its obverse side. The words "Royal Life Saving Society" was moved from the outer ring and incorporated with the Society's badge into the middle. The outer ring now had the Society's motto displayed. This design is the design we are familiar with today. The size remained at 32mm in diameter.

The size remained at 32mm in diameter.



In 1942 the suspension ring was again attached flat to the medallion, as shown at right.

During the Second World War due to a shortage of metal, awards, including the Bronze Medallion, were replaced by certificates.⁵² After the war medals were issued for the 1940s Bronze Medallions upon submission of certificates to the Society. Some are still being issued to this day.



The late 1950's saw the last major change of the Bronze Medallion. As shown at left, the Bronze Medallion decreased in size from 32mm (dated 1956) to 25mm (dated 1958) diameter. The observe design did not changed. The reverse side however, is now blank.

1990s Aust Bronze

Sub-Aqua Bronze c1970s

Undated Bronze

⁵² Pearsall, R. (1991). Lifesaving: The Story of The RLSS-The First 100 years. p33.



RLSS Member Countries

Australia	Royal Life Saving Society – Australia
Bangladesh	Centre for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh
Barbados	Royal Life Saving Society Barbados
Cameroon	Royal Life Saving Society Cameroon
Canada	Lifesaving Society (Canada)
Cyprus	Cyprus Lifesaving Federation
Ghana	Ghana Lifesaving and Diving Association
Gibraltar	Royal Life Saving Society Gibraltar
Hong Kong	The Hong Kong Life Saving Society
India	Rashtriya Life Saving Society (India)
Jamaica	Royal Life Saving Society Jamaica
Kenya	Kenya Lifesaving Federation
Lesotho	The Royal Lesotho Lifesaving Association
Malaysia	Life Saving Society of Malaysia
Mauritius	Royal Life Saving Ile de Maurice (Mauritius)
New Zealand	The Royal Life Saving, New Zealand
Malta	Royal Life Saving Society Malta
Nigeria	The Royal Life Saving Society of Nigeria
Pakistan	Pakistan Life Saving
Singapore	Singapore Life Saving Society
South Africa	Lifesaving South Africa
St Lucia	St Lucia Life Saving Association
Sri Lanka	Life Saving Association of Sri Lanka
Tanzania	Tanzania Life Saving Society
Trinidad & Tobago	Trinidad & Tobago Lifesaving Society
Uganda	Royal Life Saving Society Uganda
United Kingdom	Royal Life Saving Society UK



Recipients of the HRH Prince Michael of Kent 125th Anniversary Certificate of Merit

Australia

Dr Shayne Baker OAM
Suzanne Baxter-Winch
Carol Crofts
Dr Richard Franklin
Gary Wayne Kearney
Dianne Montalto ESM
Ross Peters
Robert Reid
Pene Snashall

Paul Barry
Kerry Bell
Sarah Dowd
Anne-Maree Gardiner
Greg McLennan
Barbara Morgan OAM
David Porter
Fritz Risler
Alan Swinton OAM QPM

Jeanette May Baxter-Reid
Randall Cook
Norman Farmer ESM
Paul James
Lesley McGurgan
James Morgan
Daphne Read AO
Joan Scott
John Winch

Cameroon

Justin Bakinga

Canada

Craig Amundsen
Heather Barnhouse
Robert Clark
Doreen Drysdale
Yanick Graveline
Nicole Liddell
Lawrence Patterson
Tony Toriglia

Ron Aubrey
Dr Stephen Beerman
Barbara Costache
Joan Duncan
Richard Huint
W Edward Montgomery
Lisa Pittet
Doug Trentowsky

John Banks
Rob Campbell
Patrick D'Almada
Graham Esplen
Patricia Kitchen
Jocelyn Palm
Rick Stilling

Commonwealth Headquarters

Clive Holland

Dr Clive Patrickson

Gibraltar

Norbert Sene

Hong Kong

Wai Lun Anthony Chan MH JP Dr Chi Kau Johnnie Casire Chan BBS JP

Tak Chung Eric Cheung MH Fuk Keung David Ho

Chi Fai Keith Leung Yat Yiu Mui

Yat Cheong Abby Tsoi Kam Chiu Wai

Hon Wah Steve Lau SBS BBS CStJP

Chak Wah Stephen Ma OStJ CPM

Dr Che To Patrick Yeung



India

Rtd Rear Admiral Purushottam Sharma

Kenya

Paul Agwenge Angar
Pauline Raburu Miduda

Job Kania
Moses Sila Owaga

Joesph Mutune

Lesotho

Colin MacDonald

Malaysia

Lim Chien Ch'eng

Geh Thuan Tek

Malta

Alfred Cauchi

New Zealand

Judi Jessop

Singapore

Richard Ming Kirk Tan

South Africa

David Walton Bamber

Allen John Pembroke

Dylan Melvyn Tommy

St Lucia

Jacqueline Atkinson
Jerimiah Louis-Fernand

Urban Augustine

Carol Devaux

United Kingdom

Stuart Bailey
David Browne
Steve Carter
Ken Crass
Daniel Graham
Christopher Harper
Ian Hutchings
Elaine Lewis
Jim McCurry
Peter Moyes
Keith Sach
John Stainer
Michelle Weedy
Christopher Williamson

Olive Bowes
Cavell Burchell
Janet Castro
Terry Draycott
Dr Anthony Handley
Sheena Harper
Maurice Kilmister
John Long
Edward McCutcheon
Teresa Myatt
Brian Sims
Alan Sutherland
Louise Wells
Janet Wilson

Peter Brown
Lorraine Buttery
Keith Cottell
Brian Finlay
Val Hardy
Deborah Hunt
Gary Lee
Elizabeth Mapstone
Paul Moore
Vivien Reeves
Paul Skipp
Ian Symmons
Kenneth White MBE





THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1891.

INCORPORATED UNDER ROYAL CHARTER 1924.

PATRON: HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE KING

VICE-PATRON: HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH

PRESIDENT: REAR-ADMIRAL THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA
K.G., P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O.

THIS
SCHOLAR-INSTRUCTOR'S CERTIFICATE
AWARDED TO

IRIS RICKETTS

City of Bath Girls School

FOR HAVING PASSED THE NECESSARY TESTS, AND
QUALIFYING AS AN INSTRUCTOR IN THE SOCIETY'S
METHODS OF LIFE SAVING AND RESUSCITATION OF
THE APPARENTLY DROWNED

Chairman

Alicia Derlyshing

Alwyn L. Busico

Chief Secretary

Date June, 1953.



Timeline-RLSS

- 11 May 1889 Report by sub-committee of the Amateur Swimming Association on the need for lifesaving instruction.
- 3 Jan. 1891 First meeting ('informal') held to discuss the formation of a society dedicated to aquatic lifesaving. Founding of The Swimmers' Life Saving Society. A committee is formed to draft the rules of the Society.
- 7 Feb. 1891 First set of rules adopted at the first general meeting and William Henry & Archibald Sinclair named Joint Chief Secretaries.
- 25 May 1891 First public lecture on lifesaving held at the Polytechnic Institute, London.
- c. Nov. 1891 Name change to Life Saving Society.
- 1891 First edition of the *Handbook of Instruction* is published.
- 1892 The Life Saving Society holds close to 100 public lectures and demonstrations about lifesaving and its rescue methods during the year.
- 1892 [The Bronze Medallion is instituted as The Society's first lifesaving award.](#)
- Oct. 1892 First UK National Life Saving Competition is held.
- 1892 [86 awards gained \(first year\).](#)
- 1893 HRH the Duke of York (later King George V) becomes first President.
- 1893 Publication of the first edition of Sinclair and Henry's *Swimming* volume in the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes.
- 1894 First branch formed in England at Manchester.
- 31 Jan. 1894 [First Australian branch formed in New South Wales.](#)
- 1894 [334 Bronze Medallions 7 Certificates are earned in the United Kingdom.](#)
- 1896 [The Diploma instituted; still the highest lifesaving award of the Society.](#)
- 1896 [802 awards gained.](#)
- 1897 Formation of the Scottish branch.
- 1898 Visit of The Life Saving Society to Sweden.
- 1 June 1898 First issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1898-99) published.
- 1899 Lifesaving instruction adopted by the London School Board.
- 1 May 1899 Final issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1898-99) published.



- 1901 King Edward VII becomes Patron.
- 1901 Tour in Italy by a team of The Life Saving Society.
- 1901 **2,029 awards gained.**
- 1902 The “King’s Cup” (a competition trophy) presented by HRH King Edward VII.
- 1902 Tours in Germany and Austria by a team of The Life Saving Society.
- 6 Dec. 1904 **Branched established in Victoria.**
- March 1905 Granted permission to use the title ‘Royal’, but no formal title conferred.
- 24 Oct. 1905 **Branch established in Queensland.**
- 1906 Distinguished Service Medal is instituted to recognise volunteers, later replaced by Service Cross in 1941.
- 1906 **6,226 awards gained.**
- 1907 The Schafer Method of Resuscitation adopted.
- 1908 **The Award of Merit instituted.**
- 10 Dec. 1908 First Canadian Branch established in Ontario.
- 1909 **Branch established in South Australia.**
- 1909 First New Zealand Branch (Wanganui) is formed.
- 1909 William Henry’s tour of Canada.
- 1909 **First edition of SLSA’s *The Australian Surf Life Saving Handbook*.**
-
- 1910 HRH King George V consents to become Patron.
- 1910 **SLSA Surf Bronze Medallion introduced**
- 1910 Lord Desborough becomes President (Acting President since 1901), remains so until his death in 1944.
- 1910 **William Henry’s tour of Australia and New Zealand.**
- 1911 **12,753 awards gained.**
- 1913 William Henry’s tour of South Africa.
- 1913 South African and Southern Rhodesian branches formed.
- 1 June 1914 First issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1914-18) published.



-
- 1915 Branch established in Tasmania.
- 1916 11,074 awards gained.
- 1 May 1918 Final issue of *The Swimming Magazine* (1914-18) published.
- 1919 First Australian conference of state branches.
-
- 1921 20,689 awards gained.
- 14 July 1924 Formal Royal Charter of Incorporation granted by King George V.
- 1924 Honorary Life Member and Honorary Governor are instituted.
- 1924 Malta branch formed.
- 1924 Branch established in Western Australia.
- 1924 Dual system of lifesaving established between Surf Life Saving Association, Australia (being responsible for ocean surf beaches) and Royal Life Saving Society –Australia (responsible for all other stillwater locations).
- 10 Dec. 1925 Australian Federal Council created.
- 1926 37,985 awards gained.
- 1928 Sydney J Monks appointed Chief Secretary, after death of William Henry.
-
- 1930 First conference of UK branches.
- 1931 The Society's instructional film "Saving Life from Drowning" produced & exhibited.
- 1931 75,370 awards gained.
- 1932 Bar to Bronze Medallion instituted.
- 1933 Empire Conference held in London.
- 1933 Tour of South Africa by Vice-President, J C Fishenden
- 1934-35 Tour of Australia and New Zealand by H H Lock, Chair of the Central Executive.
- 1935 Branch formed in Ireland.
- 1935 Bar to Award of Merit instituted.
- 1935 Resuscitation Award instituted.



- 1936 95,776 awards gained.
- 1936 Capt A E Biscoe (RAF retired) appointed Chief Secretary.
- 1936 Sea Water Diploma instituted.
- 1936 Tour of Canada by Vice-President, J C Fishenden.
- 1937 HRH King George VI consented to become Patron of The Society.
- 1937 HRH Princess Elizabeth gained the Elementary Certificate.
- 1938 Total of 105,710 awards issued to successful candidates.
- June 1938 HRH Princess Elizabeth gained the Intermediate Certificate.
- 1939 HRH Princess Margaret gained the Elementary Certificate.
-
- 1941 90,099 awards gained.
- 1944 HRH Princess Elizabeth consents to become Vice Patron of The Society.
- 1945 Lord Louis Mountbatten of Burma becomes President.
- 1945 Bronze Cross instituted.
- 1945 Acquired new permanent HQ – Desborough House, Portland Place, London.
- 1946 Lifeguard Proficiency instituted (to circa 1967)
- 1946 82,928 awards gained.
- 1948 Canadian Council of Branches formed.
-
- 1951 108,784 awards gained.
- 1952 HRH Queen Elizabeth II consented to become Patron of The Society.
- 1952 The Distinction Award instituted.
- 1953 Breakaway group, Australian Life Saving Society (Sydney based), publishes *Manual of Modern Life Saving Methods*.
- 1954 E A Pleydell, Honorary Secretary of the Australian Federal Council visited London.
- 1954 Complete self government granted to Australia.
- 1955 Captain Biscoe retires and Captain E Hale (RN retired) becomes Chief Secretary.



- 1955 RLSS-Australia (Melbourne based), publishes first (and only) manual, *Handbook of Instruction*, by using the RLSS 22nd edition.
- 1956 Hong Kong branch formed.
- 1956 President and Chief Secretary visited Australia and New Zealand, attending Council meeting at which reorganisation of The Society was discussed.
- 1956 Medal awards and certificates reduced in size due to raising costs.
- 1956 Australian Life Saving Society integrated back into the NSW Branch of RLSS.
- 1957 157,886 awards gained.
- 1957 Lord Louis Mountbatten of Burma resigns as President and accepted the office as the first Grand President of The Society.
- 1957 Proposals for the reorganisation of The Society approved by the Council.
- 1957 First edition of RLSS-Australia *Modern Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving* (1957-1962) is published.
- 1959 Chief Secretary attended meetings of Councils in Australia, Canada and New Zealand (attended South Africa in 1958) to obtain final approval of the draft Supplemental Charter.
- 1959 Establishment of RLSS Commonwealth.
- 1959 Establishment of the Australian National Branch.
- 1959 First Canadian *Handbook of Instruction* is published
-
- 27 Jan. 1960 Queen Elizabeth II grants a supplemental charter, creating the new Commonwealth organisation with five National Branches: Australian, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and United Kingdom.
- 1960 Awards issued exceeded 200,000.
- 17 July 1961 First Commonwealth Conference in London.
- 1961 South African Council and Branches became the South African Life Saving Society following the declaration of South Africa as a Republic.
- 1961 Total combined awards to date exceeded four million.
- 1962 Prince Charles gained the Elementary Certificate and Bronze Medallion.
- 1963 First edition of the RLSS-UK *Illustrated Handbook of Life Saving Instruction* published.
- 1963 First edition of RLSS-Australia *Manual of Water Safety and Life-Saving* (1963-1977).



- 1964 **62 Diplomas and 932 Distinction awards gained in the Commonwealth.**
- 1964 Queen Elizabeth II, at Lord Mountbatten's request, approved use of Royal Crown on RLSS-UK logo.
- 1964 Malaysia branch formed.
- 1965 **Establishment of Northern Territory Branch.**
- 1965 Captain Hales retires and Brigadier P de C Jones becomes Chief Secretary.
- 1965 First edition of New Zealand's first handbook.
- 18 July 1966 Second Commonwealth Conference opened.
- 16 Aug. 1967 Singapore branch formed.
-
- 1975 **Establishment of Australian Capital Territory Branch.**
-
- 1982 First edition of RLSS-Australia manual *Swimming and Life Saving* (1982-current) is published.
- 1982 *Swim & Survive* National Water Safety Program launched.
-
- 1990s Australian population above 17 million - Drowning Deaths down to 300 a year.
- 1990s Pool Lifeguard program developed and delivered.
- 1994 *Keep Watch* Launched.
-
- 2005-06 Australian population above 20 million - Drowning Deaths down at 293.
- 2008 Australian Water Safety Strategy 2008-11 launched to reduce drowning by 50% by 2020.
-
- 2011 RLSS-Australia hosts the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Vietnam.
- 2011-12 Australian population above 22 million - Drowning Deaths at 274.
- 2012 Australian Water Safety Strategy 2012-15 launched to continue 2008 objective.
- 2014-15 Australian population above 23.9 million - Drowning Deaths down at 267.
- 2015-16 Australian population above 24.1 million - Drowning Deaths at 280.



The Royal Life Saving Society



PATRON, HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE KING
PRESIDENT, H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

CERTIFICATE awarded to

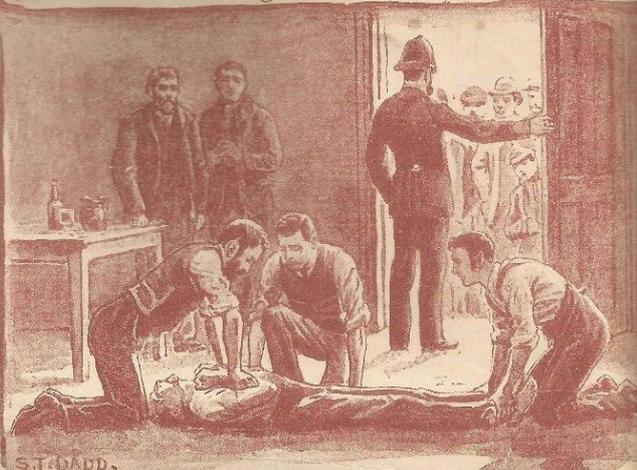
Mustafa Suka, S.P.C.

For knowledge of Rescue, Releasing one's self from the Clutch of the Drowning, also ability to render aid in Resuscitating the Apparently Drowned

James R. Leggat, Chairman

William Henry, Hon. Sec.

Dated *June 1907.*



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